DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 040 294 VT 011 245

AUTHOR	Roomkin, Myron
TITLE	High School Dropouts and Vocational Education in Wisconsin.
INSTITUTION	Wisconsin Univ., Madison. Center for Studies in Vocational and Technical Education.
PUB DATE	Jun 70
NOTE	127p.
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF-$0.50 HC-$6.45
DESCRIPTORS	Demography, *Dropout Research, *Dropouts, Economic Factors, Educational Experience, Geographic Location, Questionnaires, Student Attitudes, *Vocational Education, Work Experience
IDENTIFIERS	*Wisconsin

ABSTRACT

Preparation for employment and improved economic status are the primary objectives of vocational education for high school dropouts. To accomplish these objectives, greater knowledge is needed concerning the participation, characteristics, and motivation of those dropouts who participate in vocational education. Of an estimated 14,258 Wisconsin male dropouts for 1966-67, this study identified only 600 dropouts or 4 percent who were enrolled in vocational education programs. A sample of 286 completed a forced-choice questionnaire to determine demographic characteristics (age, race, marital status, socioeconomic class), geographic mobility patterns, educational attainment, work experience, attitudes about vocational education, and achievement motivation. The sample represented private voluntary vocational schools, public compulsory vocational plus basic schools, and public voluntary total education schools. The best explanation for the low percentage of enrollment is that not all available vocational programs are accessible to high school dropouts. Too often prohibitive educational or test requirements and tuition discourage dropout participation. (CH)

ED040294

HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUTS

AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN WISCONSIN

by

Myron Roomkin

CENTER FOR STUDIES IN VOCATIONAL

AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

RESEARCH REPORT

Industrial Relations Research Institute
University of Wisconsin

June 1970

VT011245

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Primary acknowledgements for the funding of this research must go to the Center for Studies in Vocational and Technical Education, The University of Wisconsin, and the Office of Research, Wisconsin Board of Vocational, Technical, and Adult Education.

The author is indebted to the many vocational school supervisors and administrators for their assistance and cooperation in gathering data for this effort. Supplementary data on the Job Corps have been provided through the participation of Dr. William Darnell, Job Corps Office, Washington, D. C., and the assistance of Mr. William Smith of the Wisconsin Office of Economic Opportunity.

Use of the University of Wisconsin Computing Center was made possible through support of the Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation through the University of Wisconsin Research Committee.

The author is also indebted to the advisory assistance of Professor Gerald G. Somers, and the typing skill of Mrs. Karen Krueger.

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INTRODUCTION

In 1961, the National Committee for Children and Youth adopted an almost alarmist viewpoint on the general problem of high school dropouts by referring to it as "social dynamite."[1] Since then, the problems of youth employability and premature school leaving have been the subjects of many analyses and evaluations. These efforts have ranged in form from the general essay approach to the more sophisticated experiment with control groups. The product of these investigations has been a beginning of an appreciation of the characteristics of this population. No longer do we believe the stereotype of a dropout--a nonwhite male of low intellectual ability who "flunked out" of school.[2] Unfortunately, our current understanding of premature school leavers is still far from adequate.

One area in which information is badly needed is that of correction or rehabilitation for the young person who becomes and remains a dropout. The majority of our research efforts are usually made, first, to identify high school dropouts relative to high school graduates, and second, to identify reasons for

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[1]National Committee for Children and Youth, Social Dynamite: The Report of the Conference on Unemployed, Out-of-School Youth in Urban Areas (Washington: May 24, 1961).

[2]Bartell W. Cardon, "Vocational Interests and Personality Patterns of School Dropouts of High Ability," in Research in Vocational and Technical Education (Madison: Center for Studies in Vocational and Technical Education, The University of Wisconsin, 1967), p. 3.

staying in school. It is in the latter area that literature is most abundant. Finally, comparisons have been made between dropouts and graduates to determine the labor market success of each group. More recently, studies have been undertaken to ascertain the long-run effects of a high school education.

In general, these research perspectives overlook one central point: in comparing dropouts to graduates, researchers are assuming that this comparison will remain constant. "Rarely do we ask whether dropouts remain dropouts, why some dropouts change their status, or what sequence of positions is typically occupied by dropouts as they increase in age and maturity."[3] The evidence seems to indicate that dropouts do alter their status over time. For example, the results of the 1963 Dropout Campaign of the President's emergency board showed that 90 percent of some 157,000 dropouts and potential dropouts in 22 states were persuaded to return to or remain in school.[4] Indeed, the phenomenon of the returning dropout is so common that some school systems have

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[3]Donald E. Super, "Vocational Development of High School Dropouts," in The School Dropout, ed. Daniel Schreiber (Washington: National Education Association, 1964), p. 56.

[4]Jeanette H. Sofokidis and Eugenia Sullivan, "New Look at School Dropouts," HEW Indicators (April 1964), p. xii. These data, however, do not differentiate between actual and potential school leavers. A standard method for dealing with the dropout problem is to enhance the retention powers of the school. For a detailed treatment of the costs and benefits associated with the prevention of premature school withdrawal, see Burton A. Weisbrod, "Preventing High School Dropouts," in Measuring Benefits of Government Investments, ed. Robert Dorfman (Washington: Brookings Institution, 1963), pp. 117-67.

created special programs to deal with the unique problems caused by this group.[5] Furthermore, dropouts can change their status in other ways. Some dropouts obtain high school diplomas many years after leaving school by fulfilling general equivalency requirements; others advance occupationally in spite of their relative educational disadvantages.

One way for a dropout to alter his status is through vocational training. A dropout can receive such vocational instruction either on or off the job. On-the-job instruction is conducted at the work place and is usually geared towards the needs and production process of a particular employer. Classroom instruction is usually broader in scope. This study concentrates on those dropouts who decide to continue their education in terms of off-the-job classroom vocational education.

Vocational Education for High School Dropouts

Vocational education for high school dropouts has two primary objectives. First, vocational instruction is a means of preparing students for the world of work; second, it is oriented towards removing differentials that exist between graduates and dropouts. In educating the dropout for the world of work, vocational educators are providing classroom programs and opportunities for all

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[5]For example, see Los Angeles City School Districts, The Dropout Who Returns to Graduate From Adult High School (Los Angeles, 1965).

students, not only the academically talented and ambitious.[6] Very simply stated, such programs are familiarizing students with the ways of productive and responsible citizens. In this pursuit, vocational education seeks to develop the skills, appreciations, knowledge, and attitudes that are necessary for vocational success.

Second, vocational education seeks to maximize the position of dropouts relative to that of graduates. This is usually achieved by compensating the dropout for the academic, technical, and attitudinal deficiencies by which he is usually characterized. The criteron for success is the nature of the labor market experiences of the vocationally educated dropout. Thus, vocational education for this population seeks to increase wage rates and occupational growth. The optimization of these conditions for dropouts depends upon the relative labor market performance of those graduates and dropouts who do not undertake vocational instruction but are otherwise comparable, and upon the costs associated with this training.[7]

Criticisms of Vocational Instruction

An often-raised criticism of vocational instruction is that high school dropouts are unable to partake in school vocational

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[6]The Board of Education of the City of Detroit, Preparing Pupils for the World of Work: A Report and Recommendations of a Special Staff Committee Appointed by the Superintendent of Schools (Detroit, 1962), p. 6.

[7]Currently, research into the relative costs and benefits associated with vocational instruction for many population groups is extremely popular. One such study has shown that favorable cost-benefit ratios exist for the vocationally trained high school dropout. See Glen G. Cain, "Benefit/Cost Estimates for Job Corps," mineographed (Madison: Institute for Research on Poverty, The University of Wisconsin, 1967).

programs. Student participation in vocational instruction is often restricted to the high school, and often, no formal public instruction is available once the dropout leaves school. This unresponsiveness of the vocational educational structure to the needs of the high school dropout was detected by the President's Commission on Civil Disorders. The Commission reported, "The special need (vocational instruction) of the dropout is still being neglected. ...With an unemployment rate for Negro youth more than twice that of white, this need is particularly acute."[8] The unemployment rate and racial consequences, however, do not reflect the true severity of this need. "Unemployment rates do not reflect discouraged abstention from the job market, underemployment, or frustrating occupational misfits that may lead to quits and unemployment."[9] "Remedial manpower and antipoverty programs as the Manpower Development and Training Act and the Job Corps can currently enroll only tens of thousands when hundreds of thousands need help."[10]

Vocational education alone cannot be the panacea for all of these attitudinal and economic needs of the high school dropout. However, some form of vocational instruction may be the principal vehicle around which a more complete rehabilitation program can best be built. If vocational education is to occupy this central

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[8]The Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (New York: Bantam Books, 1968), p. 454.

[9]U.S. Department of Labor, Manpower Report of the President and a Report on Manpower Utilization Requirements, Resources, Utilization, and Training (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1968), p. 112.

[10]National Advisory Council on Vocational Education, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, The Bridge Between Man and His Work (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1968), p. 53.

role in the salvaging of the premature school leaver, then a number of questions remain to be answered.

The initial questions are: (1) What type of vocational education should be offered? (2) How long should this training be? (3) Who should pay the training costs? The answers to these and other questions are difficult to obtain at this time. A primary reason for this difficulty is the general lack of knowledge and information about the high school dropout and his relationships with the existing vocational education structure.

The Aims of the Study

This research effort concentrates on filling some of this knowledge gap. Specifically, it examines the nature of the relationship between the high school dropout and existing vocational structure in the State of Wisconsin.

One of the aims of this investigation is to determine the characteristics of high school dropouts presently enrolled in vocational educational institutions in Wisconsin. Since neither all dropouts nor all vocational settings are identical, an additional aim of this study is to determine what type of dropout attends what type of vocational institution. A third aim is to ascertain the extent to which different types of dropouts attend the different types of vocational institutions. Finally, this effort seeks to determine the reasons or rationale behind the selection, by the different types of dropouts, of particular vocational schools.

It is hoped that the information gained from this investigation will show the need for additional research in this area. Furthermore, it is believed that this investigation can produce a body of knowledge to aid school administrators, educators, and teachers in their policy-making functions.

CHAPTER I

METHODOLOGY

To fulfill the aims of this investigation, it is assumed that both disadvantaged dropouts and vocational institutions are concepts that can be measured and quantified. The burden becomes one of creating a research design which defines these differences and then quantifies them. Given the diverse nature of the dropout population, and the wide proliferation of institutions that offer vocational instruction, a number of operational definitions were employed to assist in the construction of the design.

Conceptual Definitions

Dropouts Defined

A dropout is defined as an individual who has left high school prematurely (before the completion of the twelfth grade), without fulfilling the necessary requirements for a high school diploma. The key element in this definition is the actual withdrawal from school. All dropouts to be studied will be from 16 to 21 years of age. To simplify matters, this investigation will exclude female dropouts. Approximately 50 percent of all dropouts are female. However, most female dropouts are married and/or pregnant, and thereby pose particularly unique problems in vocational education.[1] Finally, for purposes of this study, a dropout must also be presently enrolled in vocational instruction.

Defining Vocational Education

At the present time, there is a myriad of agencies and institutions which offer vocational instruction in the State of Wisconsin. For example, 256 agencies (both public and private) claim to provide services in the Milwaukee Inner-Core.[2] Forty-one of these agencies provide vocational instruction and training. The problem is to define a conceptual framework by which to classify all of these efforts.

One simple definitional aid is to limit the investigation solely to institutional vocational instruction as opposed to correspondence-type instruction. "For many years a significant amount of technical instruction has been provided by correspondence schools."[3] Study of instruction by correspondence entails a set of circumstances significantly different from that of institutional training.

Institutional vocational instruction consists of three basic elements. First, there is the ownership or administration of the

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[1] The most recent national statistics on high school dropouts show female dropouts to be 47.1 percent of the total dropout population. For a more detailed analysis of the female dropout population see Harvey R. Hamel, "Employment of High School Graduates and Dropouts," Monthly Labor Review (June 1966), p. 643-49.

[2] See Anthony J. Mensah, "Agency: A Survey of Areas of Social Action in Milwaukee," mimeographed (1968).

[3] National Manpower Council, "Types of Vocational Schooling," in Education and Manpower, ed. Henry David (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), p. 175-76.

school. The students' involvement in terms of pupil attendance is a second element basic to any vocational instruction. Finally, all vocational education has to contain a body of knowledge or curriculum.

Administration: An institution may be publicly or privately administered. That is to say, either its facilities are open to all who desire them, or they are restricted in terms of the selection policy and courses offered. In general, a good proxy for this feature is the nature of the school's accountability to governmental agencies, the public, or other institutions. The source of operating revenue might appear to be a better indicator of ownership, but in reality, it is impossible to rely upon this as a proxy. An outstanding characteristic of the American educational system is the extent to which public funds have been used to support increasingly extended education for all young people.[4] Thus, many totally private vocational institutions receive federal grants to subsidize the education of certain groups.

Attendance: We can classify the nature of the student involvement in an institution. A student's enrollment can be either a function of law, and therefore compulsory, or a function of his own volition, and therefore voluntary in nature. In the case of a student who must attend some sort of school, but has a specific

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[4]Eli Ginzberg, "Education and National Efficiency," in Education and Manpower, p. 21.

choice as to the specific school he wishes to attend, his enrollment is viewed as compulsory in nature.

Curriculum: "It has often been pointed out that all education is vocational education, since all things taught in schools have some applicability to work."[5] However, specific vocational instruction contains any of three basic components. These components are: (1) instruction in vocational material, (2) instruction in basic and general educational skills, and (3) an emphasis on attitudinal education or cultural education. These components are usually found arranged in the following typical groupings.

1. A concentration on vocational subjects (VOC)--This research effort defines vocational education as that form of instruction which will enhance the immediate employability of an individual by supplying him with skills and/or knowledge. The emphasis in vocational education is on mastering these skills rather than on achieving some familiarity with them.

2. Vocational courses plus basic educational instruction (VOC+B)--This combination offers the dropout an educational emphasis on reading, writing, and arithmetic. In addition, vocational instruction is provided.

3. Total education (TOT)--Training the high school dropout often entails that the dropout be persuaded to re-evaluate his

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[5]National Manpower Council, "Issues in Vocational Education," in Education and Manpower, p. 129.

attitudes as they relate to school, work, and himself.[6] Attitudinal education is combined with vocational instruction, and more often than not, the dropout is also provided with basic educational skills. When all three types of elements are present (vocational, basic, and attitudinal), the institution is said to be total in scope, and is hereafter referred to as total education (TOT) for the high school dropout.

When the curriculum, administration, and attendance dimensions are combined in chart form, a matrix of the possible types of vocational institutions is created. Figure 1 combines these dimensions and reveals the possibility of twelve categories of vocational institutions for high school dropouts.

Figure 1. A Matrix of Possible Types of Vocational Schools Based on Three Key Dimensions

	Administration					
	Public			Private		
Attendance	VOC	VOC+B	TOT	VOC	VOC+B	TOT
Compulsory	1	2	3	4	5	6
Voluntary	7	8	9	10	11	12

Each cell represents a theoretical type of vocational setting; not all cells or settings are likely to occur. Matrix cells 4, 5, and 6 are situations that cannot exist by the definitions of private and compulsory. It is difficult to imagine a totally private

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[6] Harold T. Smith, Education and Training for the World of Work (Kalamazoo, Mich.: W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, 1963), p. 37.

vocational school which one is required to attend. An institution in cell 1 would also be difficult to locate. Most public schools which offer vocational education also offer basic educational development. Although training in the Armed Forces is of the cell 1 type, military training is excluded from this investigation. Cell 7 consists of adult educational facilities. This author feels that this type of program is relevant for high school dropouts, but preliminary investigation has shown that such schools enroll a very small number of high school dropouts with the previously-stated characteristics. Those institutions which are described by cell 11 are almost nonexistent. There would be a tendency for the institutions in cell 11 to eventually move into the twelfth cell. Finally, those institutions described in cell 3 can also exist, but again the tendency would be for these schools to move into the cell 9 category as they became increasingly involved with the education of dropouts.[7]

The cells that remain can be considered to represent the majority of vocational institutions that are available for the high school dropout. First, there are those schools in cell 2 which are administered by the public board of education. Such schools require compulsory attendance by all high school students

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[7]A similar movement from cell 2 to cell 3 was found to be empirically invalid. One could still advance the argument that strong pressures upon cell 2 type schools to approach a cell 3 curriculum are present whenever large numbers of disadvantaged students are involved.

who refuse to continue in the regular school tract. In these schools, the student receives instruction in vocational and basic educational skills. Second, the public sector can also create and maintain a set of voluntary vocational institutions such as those in cell 9. Both types of program emphasize the total education approach. Third, the private sector offers the dropout the opportunity to obtain training in trade schools (cell 10). Finally, the private sector can offer the high school dropout the chance to obtain total training as in cell 12.

With the aid of these operational definitions and constructs, it is possible to proceed to the next step in design construction--the development of a sample dropout population now engaged in vocational education. The next section describes the methodology associated with the sample selection and the process by which data were gathered.

Compiling a Sample

Sample Construction

Information on high school dropouts who are presently enrolled in vocational institutions was gathered with the cooperation of their vocational schools. This section describes the procedure employed to determine the number of these schools in each of the described school-type categories, the size of the total enrollments for each of these categories, and the criteria for including specific schools in the sample.

Private/Voluntary/Vocational Schools: At this time very little is known nationally about this type of vocational institution. We do know that its purpose appears to be (1) education for employment, (2) preparation for licensing, or (3) a combination of both.

In 1958, a survey of all vocational facilities in Wisconsin was conducted by the Department of Public Instruction. An updated version of this survey lists all privately administered vocational facilities in the state, along with the admission requirements for each school.[8] With the cooperation of the Department of Public Instruction, an additional updating procedure was conducted on all proprietary schools in Wisconsin.

One-hundred eighty private vocational schools were found to be in operation in the state as of January 1968. It is of course important to remember that the schools listed with the Department of Public Instruction need not represent the total population of such institutions. Rather, they represent only those schools which are accredited by the state, and, in all likelihood, an overwhelming majority of the total number of institutions.

The report also provided information concerning the admission requirements of these schools. All schools which posted as their minimum entrance requirements anything less than a high school diploma were included in the initial subsample. The distribution

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[8]The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, "Wisconsin Educational and Training Facilities," mimeographed (1966).

of these schools by subject matter is stated in Table 1. Only 17, or not quite 10 percent, of these proprietary schools had admission requirements which favored the admission of high school dropouts.

Table 1. Number of Private Vocational Schools, by Type and Questionnaire Return Status

School Type	Number Surveyed	Surveyed Returned
Broadcasting arts	1	1
Religious	1	1
Trade schools	2	2
Truck driving	1	1
Cosmetology	12	12
TOTAL	17	17

Source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, "Wisconsin Educational and Training Facilities," mimeographed (1966).

Cosmetology schools represented the largest single type of proprietary school in Wisconsin. Although a national survey of proprietary schools does not exist, a 1965 study in California revealed that cosmetology schools represented the largest number of proprietary schools.[9]

The 17 schools were contacted via mailed questionnaires[10] to determine:

1. The number of male students 16-21 years old who have not obtained a high school diploma.
2. The percentage of total enrollment that these present students represent.

It is worth noting that the response rate to this mailing was 100 percent.

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[9] Harry V. Kincaid, "An Exploratory Socio-Economic Study of Private Vocational Schools," in Research in Vocational and Technical Education (Madison: Center for Studies in Vocational and Technical Education, The University of Wisconsin, 1967), p. 203.

[10] A copy of this questionnaire appears in Appendix B.

Public/Voluntary/Total Education Schools: On the federal, state, and local levels, programs have been instituted specifically to aid the disadvantaged youth. An effort was made to determine which public agencies were actively involved in this assistance. The more popular total education programs were studied to determine whether they merited inclusion in this study. The less well-known programs were also sought. A series of telephone searches was conducted to determine whether state or local agencies operated voluntary total education programs. When the existence of a program was determined, communications followed to ascertain whether such a program was oriented towards the population of school dropouts, and whether it offered instruction in total education.

The typical public-voluntary programs were found to be designed for the disadvantaged, with no specific orientation towards high school dropouts. They were of short duration with no training component included. Usually, these programs concentrated on achieving attitudinal change through intensified cultural education.[11]

The U.S. Job Corps was the major--if not the sole--public-voluntary program which offered the total educational approach for the school dropout. The general aims of the Job Corps are to provide vocational and basic educational instruction, and to attempt to

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[11]For example, the Wisconsin State Employment Service conducts an orientation program for disadvantaged workers, called Community Involvement Towards Employment (CITE). The program has no specific vocational training element and is designed to orient the disadvantaged worker to the proper values and norms associated with acquiring and holding a job. Although high school dropouts can apply for this program, few have participated since the program's inception.

familiarize the dropout with the nature of work. A great deal of stress is placed upon this latter attitudinal education.[12]

In September 1967, Wisconsin boasted three Job Corps Centers: an urban center at Sparta (Camp McCoy), and two smaller rural camps (at Laonia and at Clam Lake). The Sparta operation was phased out in February 1968. The remaining two camps were contacted to determine whether their cooperation would be forthcoming. In addition, with the cooperation of the Wisconsin Office of Economic Opportunity, summary statistics were acquired from the federal Office of Economic Opportunity on all corpsmen with Wisconsin residence.

In discussing the Job Corps, it is important to realize that this research gathered data on corpsmen who are Wisconsin residents. It was felt that corpsmen without this residence characteristic would distort the findings as they relate to Wisconsin. Hereafter, any allusion to the Job Corps, unless specifically stated to the contrary, is a reference to the corpsmen from Wisconsin.

Public/Compulsory/Vocational Plus Basic Schools: Wisconsin's compulsory attendance law requires that all students attend school until their sixteenth birthday. In those school districts which offer day class programs in vocational, technical, or adult education, the student must attend the vocational school until his eighteenth birthday. The pupil may choose to attend the vocational school in lieu of attending the regular high school.

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[12] Smith, Education and Training, p. 38.

In Wisconsin, the responsibility for vocational education in the public schools and in the adult educational schools is administered through the Wisconsin Board of Vocational, Technical, and Adult Education (WBVTAE). Predominantly, the WBVTAE provides training for the post-high school student. Programs are oriented either towards the completion of an Associate of Arts degree, or towards non-matriculated adult courses.

A branch of the WBVTAE in Milwaukee, the Continuation School, has as its purpose compliance with the state attendance statute by offering the present high school student the opportunity to continue his education in the vocational education division. Students who express a desire to leave school permanently are given the option of attending the vocational school or remaining in the regular high school. The student is not permitted to leave high school per se. While the decision to attend the Continuation School is voluntary, attendance in the vocational school is compulsory once the student opts for the change. Instruction is offered in general vocational courses and classromm time is spent on mastering educational skills.

While the formal curriculum is vocational with basic educational emphasis, it is impossible to limit or delete attitudinal change. At the Continuation School, the first task is:

> ...to help the student make a fresh start and regain a sense of self-confidence. A student comes to us (the Continuation School) with many problems and past failures in schools and with a degree of hostility that has often been cumulative over his life history. He has had problems with his parents, teachers, police, judges, and other disciplinary agencies which have led him to the conclusion that society is against him and no one wants him.[13]

Teachers attempt to reach a social rapport with students. However, formal cultural education is not provided.

Public/Voluntary/Total Education Schools: The manpower revolution of the 1960s has witnessed a rapid growth in training programs designed for the disadvantaged worker. Of particular interest has been the large number of self-help programs. A well-known example of this type of program is the Opportunity Industrialization Center (OIC). Milwaukee is the home of an OIC branch operation. At the time of this study, it was the only such program in operation in Wisconsin. Course offerings at the OIC are given on two levels of concentration. The feeder program constitutes the first level, and it concentrates on basic educational skills and minor vocational instruction. The second level of concentration offers the individual the opportunity to partake of specialized training situations. In each facet of the program, a strong attempt is made to achieve an alteration in the student's perspective--from student recruitment to job placement.[14]

Identifying the Dropouts and Data Retrieval

Arrangements were made to contact each school that reported high school dropouts as current students. Table 2 shows the distribution of high school dropouts by the type of vocational school.

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[13]Milwaukee Vocational Technical and Adult Schools, Continuation School Faculty In-Service Institute: Group Couseling with the Disadvantaged Adolescent (Milwaukee, 1967), p. 2.

[14]Unfortunately, a recent controversy within the management of OIC in Milwaukee has pre-empted any cooperation of the OIC with this research.

In general, large samples were compiled in each of the possible school-type categories, relative to the size of the population from which they were drawn.

Table 2. The Distribution of High School Dropouts Reported and Surveyed, by School Type

	Dropouts Reported		Dropouts Surveyed			
		% of All Students in	Surveys Sent Out		Surveys Usable	
School Type	No.	Category	No.	%	No.	%
PRIV/VOL/VOC	34	10.9	34	100	28	82.3
PRIV/VOL/TOT	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
PUBL/COM/VOC+B	550[a]	100.0	250	45.4	238	95.2
PUBL/VOL/TOT	26	2.5[b]	26	100	20	76.9
TOTAL	600		300		286	

n.a. = not available for inclusion in this study.

[a]This total includes only the Continuation School. Therefore, it is a partial category total. A final total would include all these students and the remaining students with the proper characteristics in the WBVTAE system. This larger total will be discussed in Chapter VIII.

[b]This percentage represents only those members of the Job Corps rural camp population who were both dropouts and residents of the State of Wisconsin. Data from Camp McCoy are excluded from this total.

During the 1968 fiscal year, male Wisconsin input into all Job Corps Centers consisted of 1,092 enrollees. Present Wisconsin rural camps corpsmen are about one percent of this total.

Once the size of the dropout population in each cell was identified, each participating school administered a questionnaire to its respective students.[15] A return glance at Table 2 reveals

[15]This questionnaire, of the forced-choice variety, had been pretested through the assistance of the Madison Office of the Youth Opportunity Center on eleven high school dropouts who had returned to school.

that a discrepancy exists between the number of dropouts originally reported in each cell and the eventual number of usable questionnaires. The reason for this discrepancy lies in the fact that some students either left or graduated from their schools during the time lag associated with the processing of the initial requests to the schools. Other students returned improperly completed questionnaires. The usable questionnaires had an over-all nonascertained rate that was tolerable. Where a particularly high number of nonascertained responses appeared, an effort is made to explain them in light of the particular question.

Categorization of Factors

A wide spectrum of information was requested in the questionnaire, reflecting the basic effort to establish those variables which differentiate among dropouts. All questionnaires were coded, keypunched, and verified. The gathered data were categorized into five groups of influencing factors. First, there are those qualities descriptive of any population: age, race, and educational attainment. Second, there is the residential history of the respondent. The educational experiences of the dropout comprise the third set of relevant factors. A fourth group of factors are economic influences, or those economic pressures which allocate dropouts to jobs in the labor market. Finally, there are the socio-psychological pressures which influence the allocating process and prompt dropouts to attend a particular school.

The body of this report will discuss each group of factors. Efforts are made to isolate the true or more significant factors both within major groupings and between them.

Since sample size for each school type approximated a complete census of the population within each cell, it is not necessary to test the null hypothesis that differences between school types are significant. An absolute difference between these schools is by definition statistically significant. Alternatively, however, statistical tests can be used to determine whether the present results are indicative of this population at other periods in time.

In all testing operations, a confidence limit of 5 percent is used as the cutoff for accepting the null hypothesis that differences between schools are significant. This level was chosen because this research is to a great extent exploratory. A higher level of confidence would tend to obscure relevant factors that by chance have been submerged; a lower level homogenizes all factors so as to make the extraction of forces almost impossible.

CHAPTER II

A GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE DROPOUTS IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION: THE DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS

To provide an overview of the dropouts studied, concentration on their broad "socio-demographic" attributes is needed. These qualities are: age, race, marital status, and the socioeconomic class of the student. The most significant demographic differences among the studied schools were attributable to the race and age of the respondents.

Age

Dropouts attending private vocational schools were found to be significantly older ($p>.01$) than either rural corpsmen or continuation students. Pupils of the Continuation School were found to be the youngest of all the students studied.

Wisconsin rural Job Corpsmen in Conservation Centers were, on the average, 17.9 years of age. However, data on Conservation Centers for the entire United States reveal an average age of 18.22 years.[1] This difference is significant at the .01 level. Furthermore, statistics for all Wisconsin residents as inputs into all Job Corps facilities (both rural and urban) in 1968 show that 34 percent of these inputs are over 18 years of age.[2] In Wisconsin's

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[1] A and R Reports No. 2 (Washington: Office of Economic Opportunity, January 3, 1967), p. 4.

[2] Data provided by the U.S. Job Corps, Office of Economic Opportunity.

rural centers, 91 percent of the inputs measured by this study were 18 years and older. These findings seem to indicate that Wisconsin rural corpsmen are younger than both other rural corpsmen and the average high school dropout in the Job Corps system.

The low mean score for the Continuation School is perhaps explained by the nature of the institution. This school receives large inputs of disadvantaged 16-year-old students. It is impossible to guarantee student attendance until the eighteenth birthday to comply with the law, and many students leave this vocational school prematurely.

Race

The distribution of race in the sample is depicted by Table 3. The most startling observation from these data is the complete absence of all nonwhite races from private vocational education in the State of Wisconsin. Nonwhites, however, are represented in the Continuation School and the Job Corps.

Table 3. Percentage Distribution of Race, by School Name

Race	School Name		
	Job Corps	Continuation	Private
White	70.00%	62.70%	100.00%
Negro	10.00	30.29	---
Puerto Rican	---	1.76	---
Indian	20.00	1.32	---
Mexican-American	---	3.96	---
Oriental	---	1.97	---
TOTAL	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

The Continuation School has the largest percentage of Negro students in the sample. In fact, 97.18 of all Negroes in the total sample are Negro continuation students. Other nonwhites such as Mexican-Americans, Orientals, and Puerto Ricans are also well represented in the Continuation School.

Job Corps students from Wisconsin are more likely to be Indian than Negro. National Job Corps statistics show twice as many nonwhites, on a percentage basis, than were displayed by the conservation subsample.

Of particular importance was the finding that racial representation in each school was not indicative of the over-all racial proportions for youth in Wisconsin. Two percent of Wisconsin's youth population between 14 and 18 years of age are nonwhite.[3] However, 30 percent of the measured Wisconsin Job Corpsmen are of nonwhite racial identities; nonwhite enrollment is 62 percent of white enrollment in the Continuation School.

Marital Status

Of all the situations studied, only the private schools had a noticeably large positive response to the question: "Have you ever been married?" In private schools, about 36 percent of the students reported being presently or previously married. The corresponding figure for the Continuation School was 1.26 percent of the surveyed students, while none of the Job Corps students were ever married.

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[3] U.S. Census, 1959.

It appears that the marital status of the private students is a function of their older age distribution. Table 4 attempts to hold constant the effects of age on the marital status of the private school students. The distribution reveals that two-thirds of all private students were aged 19-21; all married students were in this older category.

Table 4. The Marital Status of Private Students, by Present Age

	Marital Status		
Age	% Married at Least Once	% Never Married	Total
16-18	---	100.0%	100.0%
19-21	55.5%	44.5%	100.0%

At this time marriage can be linked to age as an allocating influence. However, it remains unclear whether marriage has an independent influence as a motivating factor in the decision to attend private vocational instruction.

Socioeconomic Class

Each student was asked whether his father was presently living and the father's occupation. From this occupational information an appropriate socioeconomic index number was assigned.[4] The assigned index number was a function both of occupational title and of earnings. The highest possible index level was set at 86. Table 5

[4]The U.S. Census, Socio-Economic Index for Detailed Occupations was used to determine the social class of the respondents. NORC prestige scales were not used in this study.

states the distribution of these socioeconomic levels for the three schools studied.

Table 5. Percentage Distribution of Socioeconomic Indexes, by School Name

Socioeconomic Index	School Name		
	Job Corps	Continuation	Private
0- 9	28.5%	8.5%	4.7%
10-19	71.4	38.3	38.1
20-29	---	16.3	19.0
30-39	---	19.1	19.0
40-49	---	7.8	4.7
50-59	---	3.5	14.3
60-69	---	.7	---
70-79	---	---	---
80-86	---	---	---
TOTAL[a]	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
MEAN INDEX	12.71	26.43	27.52
Differences between means			
Job Corps	0.0	13.72*	14.81*
Continuation	-	0.00	1.09
Private	-	-	0.00

[a]Totals may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

*Significant at the .01 level.

It is interesting to note that on an absolute basis, all schools were characterized by a generally low level of socioeconomic

status. This conclusion seems to be one major finding in most studies about dropouts.[5]

Differences in mean scores show that the continuation and private students are of higher social and economic strata than the Job Corps students. Continuation and private students are approximately equal on this dimension.

To check the validity of the socioeconomic index, additional information was sought on the social class of the respondent's family.

In terms of the educational attainment of the parents, one-half of the fathers of private vocational students completed high school, whereas 34 percent of the fathers of continuation students completed the twelfth grade. Among corpsmen, only 5 percent reported that their fathers graduated from high school.

Generally, fathers with college educations were not very common. The highest incidence of a college education for male parents was recorded in the private schools, where almost 15

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[5] A University of Michigan study reported that among all families with children no longer in school, these children had gone through high school and beyond in 65 percent of the cases. The families defined as poor in this study displayed a completion rate of 45 percent. See James Morgan, Income and Welfare in the United States (New York: McGraw Hill, 1962), p. 216. Similar findings are reported by S,M. Miller of Syracuse University. In his study, census data were employed and reanalyzed. Miller claims 70 percent of all dropouts come from families whose income is below $5,000 per year. See Daniel Schreiber, ed. The School Dropout (Washington: National Education Association, 1964), p. 12. Finally, Bowen and Matthews provide additional evidence. Employing a socioeconomic class breakdown, they determined that 87.7 percent of all dropouts were in the lower class interval. See Paul H. Bowen and Charles V. Matthews, Motivation of Youths for Leaving School (Quincy, Ill.: U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Office of Education, 1960), p. 57.

percent of the fathers had received college diplomas. Continuation students and corpsmen reported 8 and 6 percent respectively of their fathers had obtained college educations.

This relationship between schools was essentially similar for the mothers of these students. In all schools the education of the female parent was usually terminated before high school. Those female parents who completed high school were twice as likely to be the mothers of continuation and private students than the mothers of corpsmen. Again, corpsmen ranked lowest in social class indicators. The incidence of college educations for female parents was negligible in all schools.

In summary, the educational attainment of the parents varies in accordance with the nature of the distribution of socioeconomic indexes.

These variances in socioeconomic strata were also reflected in the incidence of car ownership for the dropout during high school. One-third of all private students related that they had owned their own automobile while they were high school students. Only 15 percent of the continuation students and 10 percent of the corpsmen reported car ownership during this period.

The pattern of demographic qualities for each subgroup that emerges reveals that these characteristics can partly describe each of the three situations. Private students are significantly older white students with relatively high socioeconomic status. Continuation students are essentially of the same socioeconomic

strata in spite of the large representation of minority groups among them. Continuation students are also generally the youngest students studied. Wisconsin conservation corpsmen were found to be of a different subsample than the rest of the U.S. Job Corps system, These rural students are younger than dropouts in the total Job Corps system, and are better represented by Indian students than by Negroes.

In future chapters, these sociodemographic qualities will be studied in the light of added variables. Wherever necessary, the already disclosed differences between schools are controlled in the analysis of school differences that follows. The impact of the relationship between demographic qualities and other relevant factors is seen the the next chapter on the mobility patterns of the high school dropout.

CHAPTER III

THE GEOGRAPHIC MOBILITY PATTERNS OF THE HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUT

The significance of residential factors in this study is twofold. First, residential histories are descriptive in nature. The particular residential pattern of the student often sets him apart from other students in terms of personal and family experiences. The implication of this type of information rests heavily upon such items as the curriculum needs, educational attainment, and occupational outlook. In this study, however, we are interested in those residential patterns which could influence the choice of vocational education for the high school dropout. The second use of residential information lies in its predictive rather than its descriptive function. Residential histories can be used to determine whether the propensity towards future mobility is influenced and/or explained by past mobility. The predictive value of this information lies in the ability of vocational school administrators to enhance the placement process for their students.

Educational institutions often fail to acquire complete sets of residential histories from their students. Often, such detailed information is not known by the student himself--particularly the more mobile students. For this reason, it was decided that only the broadest residential and mobility information could be acquired

through the student via questionnaire. In the discussion that follows, we are looking for these broad patterns.

Descriptive Geographic History

Place of Birth

Respondents were asked to report the city and state of their birth. Table 6 reports the cumulative distribution of city sizes indicated by the students. Also shown is a level of significance matrix which employs the Kolmogrov-Smirov Chi Square Transformation on cumulative percentages from two samples. This tabulation reveals that differences exist in the town size of the respondent's birthplace. The most significant difference is between the Job

Table 6. Cumulative Percentage Distribution for Size of City of Birth and A Corresponding Significance Matrix[a]

	School Name		
City Size	Job Corps	Continuation	Private
Unincorporated	15.00(15.00)	1.83(1.83)	00.00(00.00)
Incorporated- 2,499	40.00(25.00)	5.02(3.19)	3.57(3.57)
2,500-9,999	60.00(20.00)	15.06(10.04)	10.71(7.14)
10,000-24,999	60.00(00.00)	20.96(5.90)	14.28(3.57)
25,000-49,999	60.00(00.00)	24.15(3.19)	28.57(14.29)
50,000-99,999	65.00(5.00)	26.89(2.17)	39.28(10.71)
100,000-249,999	80.00(15.00)	30.08(3.19)	39.28(00.00)
250,000+	100.00(20.00)	100.00(69.92)	100.00(60.72)

X^2 Significance Matrix With 2 Degrees of Freedom

Job Corps	---	.001	.001
Continuation	---	---	.500
Private	---	---	---

[a]Actual percentage distribution given in parentheses.

Corps and the other types of schools. Mean town sizes on this characteristic were approximately 13,000 for the Job Corps,

80,000 for the private students, and 85,000 for the continuation students.

Pupils in the Conservation Center system generally appear to be less rural in nature than the Wisconsin Corpsmen studied. Nationally, 21 percent more conservation corpsmen were born in towns of 2,500 people and under,[1] while this study found 40 percent of the students from towns of this size.

Most Job Corpsmen reported their place of birth to be in Wisconsin. However, 20 percent had regional identities in the South. Private students overwhelmingly were born in Wisconsin. All private students that were not born in Wisconsin reported, as their place of birth, a state which is continguous with Wisconsin.[2]

Variations existed in the Continuation School on the regional identity of the students. Although 81.3 percent of the measured continuation students were born in the Midwest, 17 percent of the continuation students were born in the South, and 1 percent traced their roots to the western United States. Marginal representation existed for eastern states, and some students, mainly Puerto Ricans, traced their origin to noncontinental backgrounds. However, in spite of these regional identity variations between schools, Kolmogrov-Smirov Chi Square transformations show that no excessively significant variation exists between schools on this gradient.

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[1] A and P Reports No. 2 (Washington: Office of Economic Opportunity, January 3, 1967), p. 7.

[2] These states are: Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, and Minnesota.

Place of Birth and Race: It is often maintained that a great portion of the youth unemployment problem stems from a South-to-North and rural-to-urban migration pattern. This pattern is usually closely associated with the migration patterns of nonwhites. This study found some differences between schools on these migration patterns.

Private students,as stated previously, were all white. In addition, they tended to be solely from the Midwest, and more specifically, from urban Midwest settings.

The sizable number of nonwhites in the Continuation School gives some credence to the South-to-North, rural-to-urban pattern. All southern-born continuation students were Negro. All of these students were born in rural towns of 2,500 inhabitants. In fact, more rural Negroes were born in the South than in any other section of the nation. Indians in the Continuation School were from the Midwest and were essentially rural in character.

White students in the Job Corps were twice as likely to be rural southerners than white students in the Continuation School. Rural males were more often whites than Negroes. This finding conforms to the general pattern of all Job Corps Centers, where "half of the rural males, but only a third of the urban males are white."[3] Job Corps Indians tended to be from even smaller towns than Indians in continuation studies, and thus were even more rural in character.

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[3] A and R Reports No. 2, p. 6.

From Birth to School Withdrawal

To determine the mobility patterns, the students were asked to respond to the following questions:

In what city did you go to high school the longest?
In what city or town did you live when you left high school?

It was found that mobility patterns differed according to the schools studied. The following differences were observed:

Job Corps: Forty-five percent of these students reported that the school they last attended was the same school they attended the longest. However, this school was not located in their town of birth. On previous questioning (Table 6), three out of five students were born in towns of 50,000 people and under. When they left high school, almost four out of five lived in towns of such size. For the most part, these students remained in the relatively rural areas for most of their lives.

Forty percent of all surveyed in the Job Corps reported that they had never moved at all. Furthermore, all corpsmen reported that by the time they entered high school, they were living in Wisconsin.

Continuation: Over one-half of the continuation students never changed residence. These were primarily those students who were born in SMSAs in Wisconsin (predominantly Milwaukee). One-third of these students showed one geographic move. This move took place between the time of birth and entrance into high school.

There was a gravitation of all continuation students towards Milwaukee as witnessed by the increase in average city size from the last residence question: In what city of town did you live when you left high school? Between birth and high school, mean city size for these students increased from approximately 85,000 to 250,000. Only 3 percent of this sample lived outside the Midwest while attending high school, as compared with 20 percent who were born in non-midwestern states. Once in high school, it appears that almost no additional major change in city identification took place.

Private: Fifty percent of students in private schools tended to maintain their place of residence until the time of school withdrawal. The remaining 50 percent were extremely mobile. It appears that the nonmobile students tended to be born in Milwaukee, whereas the mobile students were born in smaller towns and cities. Mean city size for the private students levels off during the high school years. This leveling seems to be a function of two forces. First, there was the movement of those living in SMSAs towards the smaller areas. Second, those who lived in smaller towns, almost equal in numbers to the SMSA slippage, moved to larger areas. These forces can be seen working together, insofar as all private students attended high school in Milwaukee.

Recent Mobility

An important difference in mobility patterns arises which is based on the recency of moves. To determine the recency of moves

as they are related to Wisconsin, an operating assumption was employed. It was believed that students tend to move with their families. Thus, by measuring the number of family moves over recent time periods, some understanding of the recency of mobility for the student is obtained.

Students were asked to record yes-or-no answers to the following questions:

Do your parents live in Wisconsin?
Did your parents live in Wisconsin last year?
Did your parents live in Wisconsin two years ago?

The results of these answers are recorded in Table 7.

Table 7. Percentage of Students with Parental Residence in Wisconsin

Length of Stay (in years)		School Name: Job Corps	Continuation	Private
Now living in Wisconsin	Yes	95.0	96.1	93.3
	No	5.0	3.9	7.7
Last year	Yes	95.0	92.6	92.6
	No	5.0	7.4	7.4
Two years ago	Yes	95.0	91.3	92.6
	No	5.0	8.7	7.4

The vast majority of students in each school has lived in Wisconsin for three years. A test of proportionality reveals that there is no difference between schools on any of the questions at the .05 level.

Descriptive Qualities: An Implication

These residential descriptions have a very relevant implication concerning the nature of the institutions studied. Although the evidence presented is far from definitive, and the time horizon admittedly short, it seems unwarranted to ignore the more enlightening aspects of these data.

While discernment of diversity is the central aim of this study, similarity between schools, when it exists, can be of equal importance. The finding that students in this study have lived in Wisconsin for at least three years is such an important common factor. Frequently, one hears this claim of educators in reference to school leavers: "If we could have received them earlier, the outcome could have been different." The information gathered in this study tends to refute the claims that high school dropouts are the products of inferior out-of-state schools, and that the responsibility for failing to achieve school retention can be shifted to other school systems.

Forty percent of the Job Corps students were born and raised in Wisconsin and are the products of Wisconsin rural school districts. Continuation students are substantially white pupils who have always lived in Wisconsin. A similar pattern exists for the private institutions. Thus, some indications exist that the problem is to some extent that of school retention as well as the ill-preparedness of students. This, however, should not be interpreted as an across-the-board criticism of <u>all</u> school retention programs in

all school districts. On the contrary, the relationships are too complex to be analyzed in such a generalized manner, and no retention program (outside of authoritarian and compulsory education) can guarantee complete success.

As for those students who entered the Wisconsin school system with the mark of educational quality from schools in other states, the picture is somewhat different. The interstate migration of Negroes from the rural South to Milwaukee is bound to present a particularly unique set of educational circumstances for the Continuation School as the recipient of many disadvantaged youths.

Negroes in the Job Corps camps are essentially urban in background. Undoubtedly, the confrontation of rural white with urban black is bound to produce some difficulties for the administration of the Job Corps system.[4]

Propensity and Willingness to Move

Much of the future mobility of these students will depend upon their willingness to move. One could also envision that future mobility will be a function of the propensity to move as displayed previously. To test this relationship, the students were asked to specify whether they would move to another city to acquire a better job after leaving vocational school. The object of this question

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[4]Often, the cultural shock associated with new surroundings and new and different faces has impeded the educational processes of the camps. While no hard evidence to this effect exists, this opinion was commonly shared by many former administrative workers in the Wisconsin Job Corps system who were interviewed during the course of this investigation.

was to associate, for the dropouts, the relationship between geographic mobility and economic advantage. Or, in other words, this question sought to get at the economic incentives of mobility.

The hypothesis was posed that there was some difference in score between schools on willingness to move. Data for testing this hypothesis are represented in Table 8. The hypothesis was rejected when chi square computations found these distributions to be nonsignificant at the .05 level.

Table 8. Percentage Distribution of Opinions Concerning Geographic Mobility in Search of Economic Rewards, by School

Opinion	School Name		
	Job Corps	Continuation	Private
TOTAL	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Willingness to move	20.00	46.10	42.30
Unwilling to move	80.00	53.90	57.70

X^2 with d.f. 2 = 5.09 ($p < .10 > .06$)

When willingness to move was combined with propensity to move, the results showed that those students who were willing to attempt geographic mobility for a better job were also more likely to have the smallest number of moves in their residential histories. In the Job Corps, all of the corpsmen who expressed a desire to move had never moved previously; 30 percent of the total continuation sample

were willing to move but had never moved before; and private students, who wanted to move, overwhelmingly had never moved before.

Faced with these results, the alternative hypothesis was advanced that age intervened to influence willingness to move. Mean age, this hypothesis continued, varies between schools; therefore, willingness to move will vary according to age and school. The results of this investigation showed that as age increased from 16 to 21 years, the students were more willing to move. Since students in the private school were generally older, a greater proportion of these students expressed a desire to be mobile when compared to the students in the other schools.

The implication of this information for private schools may prove useful in the establishment of placement procedures for vocational school graduates. Concerted counseling activities with enlarged placement efforts can be combined with the views of the older, more mature student--one who is willing to attempt labor market entrance in geographic areas where entrance level jobs are more abundant. However, some question remains whether the Job Corps and the Continuation School can channel students into these geographic areas where their opportunities for employment can be optimized.

Summary

The major lines of discussion in this chapter can be drawn together in summary form. First, Job Corps students tend to be more rural in background than the other students. However, the

Wisconsin Corps was less rural in character than the rest of the nation's Conservation Center system. The Continuation School displayed the most varied types of regional identity at the time of birth. However, variations in regional identities at the time of birth were not statistically significant. Third, all students showed a gradual movement towards the larger metropolitan areas. The private school students were the most mobile of the students studied. Fourth, the future willingness to move is better explained in terms of the student's age rather than his history of mobility and propensity to move. Private students were more willing to move because they were generally older than the rest of the population studied. Finally, the implications drawn from descriptive information of residential patterns were found to be useful in explaining the relationship of the students to the public school system, and in our ability to partially predict and augment the future labor market routes for these students.

CHAPTER IV

THE EDUCATION OF HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUTS

The relationship of the dropout to his former school is extremely important. To understand this population adequately, we must acquire some idea as to the amount of formal education these students have completed and the rationale behind the premature termination of their education.

Educational Attainment

The educational attainment of the high school dropout is an additional descriptive quality of this population. A glance at Table 9 reveals that private school students have completed a significantly greater number of school grades than the Job Corps students. However, the difference in attainment between the Continuation School and the private sector is not significant at the 5 percent level.

Data on Job Corps students indicate that Wisconsin Conservation students are indicative of the national Conservation Center picture. The mean grade attained for all students (nationally) in rural camps is 9.11 years of schooling.[1] Wisconsin rural corpsmen attained on the overage 9.2 years of school.

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[1]This attainment pattern was derived from Conservation camp data that have been made comparable with data from this survey. See A and R Reports No. 2 (Washington: Office of Economic Opportunity, January 3, 1967), p. 5.

Table 9. Important Mean Scores and Differences Between Means in the Educational Attainment of Dropouts

Relevant Educational Attainment Variable	Mean Scores			Difference Between Means		
	Job Corps	Continuation	Private	Job Corps - Continuation	Job Corps - Private	Job Corps - Private
Age when left high school (years)	15.10	16.10	17.10	1.00*	2.00**	1.00*
Time since leaving (years)	.88	.53	2.29	.35**	1.41**	1.76**
Educational attainment (grades)	9.20	9.36	10.40	.16	1.20*	1.04
Number of high schools	.90	1.26	1.21	.36**	.31	.06

* Significant at the .05 level.

** Significant at the .01 level.

The evidence seems to indicate that all Wisconsin Job Corps students (those Wisconsin residents in Job Corps Camps all across the nation) have completed more formal schooling than our Conservation Center sample. Mean attainment for the former group is 9.6 years, compared to our survey sample mean of 9.2 years. This difference can be attributed to the higher age concentration of urban camp inputs in general.

This discussion of mean attainment reflects the underlying attainment patterns for the schools studied. Approximately 50 percent of all private students achieved the eleventh grade level. Students in the Job Corps and the Continuation School had one-fifth of this chance to reach eleventh grade level. Second, Job Corps students were more likely not to have entered high school than either of the two alternative educational groups. On the other hand, all private students completed at least the ninth grade.

When compared to continuation students, respondents in the Job Corps also seem to have attended fewer high schools during their public school experience. No difference exists between private and the other groups of vocational students.

Attainment and Other Demographic Factors

Some sociodemographic characteristics tend to interrelate in the allocating of students to schools. One such interrelation is between the variables of age and educational attainment. Another interaction effect stems from the complementariness of race and attainment.

Age and Attainment: The influence of the respondent's age as of the time of this survey is reflected in the educational attainment data. Educational attainment can progress relatively hand-in-hand with age while an individual is a student. Accordingly, it is necessary to correct for the age differentials that exist between the studied situations. This can easily be accomplished by determining the age of the respondent as of the time of school withdrawal. Table 9 lists the mean age of the respondents for this particular time. These findings reinforce the previous findings on the age of the dropout. Private students are oldest at the time of leaving, followed by the Continuation School, and then by the Job Corps. The differences in age of the respondents by school can be traced to these differences in withdrawal ages.

Referring again to Table 9, it can be seen that private students tend to be out of school the longest (2.29 years). Continuation students reflect the compulsory nature of their system by displaying the lowest mean.

A question arises as to whether the high school dropouts studied in this survey reflect the same pattern of age and attainment as other, nonvocational school dropouts that were not surveyed. While no formal control sample was surveyed, it is still possible to use national data as the basis for comparison. Table 10 lists the national cumulative percentage distribution for each school studied. By employing the Kolmogrov-Smirnov goodness-of-fit test to this data, we derive the following conclusions: Job Corps students

Table 10. Cumulative Percentage Withdrawal Rates for Nation and the Schools Studied, by Age[a]

Age	Cumulative Percentage Withdrawal Rates			
	National[b]	Job Corps	Continuation	Private
14	3.50(3.50)	00.00(00.00)	2.20(2.20)	00.00(00.00)
15	10.40(6.90)	00.00(00.00)	8.80(6.60)	00.00(00.00)
16	47.20(36.80)	47.00(47.00)	80.60(71.80)	17.90(17.90)
17	79.40(32.20)	88.20(41.20)	99.50(13.50)	57.90(40.00)
18	100.00(20.60)	100.00(11.80)	100.00(00.50)	100.00(42.10)
Level of Stastical Difference from the National Distribution		n.s.	.01	.01

[a]Actual percentage distribution given in parentheses.

[b]Taken and adjusted from: U.S. Department of Labor, Factbook on the School Dropout in the World of Work, p. 2.

n.s. Nonsignificant at the 5 percent level.

appear to follow the national pattern of withdrawal rates. Continuation students and private students differ from Job Corpsmen in this respect, and both vary significantly from the national norm. Again, it is possible to attribute the performance of the Continuation School students to the nature of compulsory education after the sixteenth birthday. However, the private school emerges as a unique type of educational situation for the high school dropout.

The total age-attainment picture that emerges is that private students are likely to be older, better educated, and out of school longer than either of the two alternatives. Continuation students' attainments are heavily influenced by the structured nature of schol

attendance laws. They tend to leave at the age of 16 years, which corresponds to the ninth grade attainment level. Job Corpsmen have a similar attainment picture but are the youngest of all students studied at the time of withdrawal.

Attainment and Race: As noted before, Negroes were found only in the Continuation and Job Corps schools. Within the Continuation School, nonwhites were more than three times more likely not to have entered high school. Thus, Negroes on a whole in the Continuation School displayed a lower educational attainment than whites. Cross-sectional analysis of whites shows whites in the Job Corps less likely to have entered high school than continuation or private students. In private schools, whites were more likely to complete the twelfth grade.

The results of holding race constant yield conclusions which do not differ from previous findings on either race or attainment. The simple explanation for this lies in the general discussion concerning race: equal racial representation of all groups is not present in each type of school.

School Withdrawal: Why I Left

A common theme throughout the literature on the high school dropout is the concern for the factors which induce school withdrawal. Dropouts usually report single reasons for leaving school, but deciding forces may be a combination of factors. Often, the stated reason for leaving may be the immediate pressure, while other--long run--factors may also be responsible.

Within these limitations, the dropouts were presented with the opportunity to check the relevant causes of their school withdrawal. Five such causes were listed. They were:

1. I left because I wasn't learning anything useful in school.
2. I got kicked out.
3. The school work was too hard for me. I just couldn't do it.
4. I just didn't like school.
5. I wanted to stay in school, but I had to leave.[2]

The first question was aimed at determining whether the student was alienated from the classroom learning experience. Such students fail to see the relevancy of formal education to occupational advancement. Frequently, they have a particular occupation in mind--an occupation compatible with their present level of educational attainment. The responsibility for this view does not fall solely on the shoulders of the dropout; it must be shared by the school system which has failed to inculcate the association between occupational advancement and education.

It was hoped that the students who felt they were "kicked out" of school would be those who were formally asked to leave because of disciplinary problems. However, some overlapping was expected in the selection of this choice, since students could interpret this option to mean that they were forced to leave by informal pressures. Informal pressures may include, for example, the overt and covert feelings on the part of a teacher which consistently induce student failure. This self-fulfilling prophesy tends to operate on the subtlest of planes.

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[2]Questions taken from study of a job retraining program, by David Bradford, John French, Jr., and Gerald Gurin, Institute for Social Research, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

The third choice sought to identify the academically inadequate dropouts--those students who found high school academics beyond their learning capabilities. This is not to say that below-average intelligence sanctions school withdrawal. On the contrary, many students with below-average IQs can complete high school if the school system is willing to make the necessary basic curriculum adjustments.

The fourth choice was aimed at identifying the totally alienated student. For such pupils, school is completely intolerable.

Finally, the catch-all cause of additional reasons for leaving was offered. This category includes those students who withdrew for a broad spectrum of other reasons ranging from personal illness to the need to contribute income to the family.

It is not believed that these choices are mutually exclusive. Nor is it maintained that the student could adequately rank these causes. Thus, students were instructed to select all the relevant reasons. The total pattern of selections forms a school withdrawal profile for each school. This macro profile may not be representative of any one student.

Table 11 records the percentage and rank order distributions for the students in each school who selected a particular reason for withdrawing. The results of these findings warrant the rejection, on statistical grounds, of the hypothesis that there is a

difference between students based upon their stated reasons for leaving.[3] However, within each school certain interesting relationships did stand out.

Table 11. Rank Order and the Percentage of Students Selecting Reasons for School Withdrawal, by School Name*

Reasons for Leaving	School Name: Job Corps Percent	Job Corps Rank	Continuation Percent	Continuation Rank	Private Percent	Private Rank
I had to leave.	22.2	4	25.5	3	28.6	2
I wasn't learning anything.	38.9	3	33.3	2	14.3	3
I got kicked out.	11.1	5	25.4	4	4.7	4
School work too hard	50.0	1	19.3	5	0.0	5
I didn't like school.	44.4	2	55.5	1	66.6	1

*$p < .30 > .20$

Job Corps students reported that high school was too hard for them in 50 percent of the cases. Chances were 8 out of 10 that the same students reported that they didn't like school. This high interrelation seems to indicate that either these students did not like school because the work was too difficult, or their dislike for school work was a manifestation of their general dislike for school.

[3]This is based upon a Kruskal-Wallis One-Way Analysis of Variance by Ranks.

Alienation from school was the predominant reason given by the continuation students for leaving school. Students who felt that they were not learning anything useful were more numerous than either students who felt pushed out or who "flunked out" of high school.

Interesting results were noticeable in the private schools. While a large number of these students did not like school, none of the students checked as a reason for leaving their inability to perform academically. If we recall, private students had achieved a higher educational attainment level than either the Job Corps or continuation student bodies. Thus private pupils were willing to stay in school irrespective of their dislike for school. In addition, the attractiveness of school was enhanced for private students, for they tended to perceive the subject matter presented as relevant for them. One is left with the problem of ascertaining whether the private students were registering their dislike for their particular school, or their general sentiments against schooling.

It is conceivable that academic performance for these private students served as a motivating factor while they were in high school. However, school holding-power may also have been enhanced, either by the practices of the particular high school or by external forces such as home environment and peer group relationships. In subsequent chapters the reasons behind this private school phenomenon will be explored.

CHAPTER V

THE LABOR MARKET EXPERIENCE

The term labor market experience is used to denote the sum total of all exposures to the employment process. It is usually accepted that high school dropouts are disadvantaged in this process. Typically, they are paid less, work longer hours, and work at less-skilled jobs, than their graduated counterparts. Rarely, however, do we delve into the nature of the labor market experience for high school dropouts.

This section seeks to examine the labor market experience of high school dropouts without comparing it to the experience of non-dropouts in the labor market. To accomplish this task, three arbitrary time periods have been selected. The first period deals with the time in which the students were enrolled in high school. The latter period deals with the presence of part-time employment while the dropout is a full-time vocational school pupil. The middle segment attempts to delve deeply into the employment and job search history of the student between the time of school withdrawal and the time of vocational school enrollment.

The pivotal question is whether the labor market experience of each set of students differs according to their present vocational school. The importance of this issue rests on the belief that the labor market experience of the student can influence his choice of schools.

Employment and the School Years

The Elements of Employment

Interestingly, no exceptional difference exists between schools in terms of the number of students who worked while in high school. Table 12 shows the distribution of workers and nonworkers. In each case approximately one-half of the students worked at jobs while attending high school.

Table 12. Percentage Distribution of Workers and Nonworkers While in High School, by School Name

Status of Workers	School Name		
	Job Corps	Continuation	Private
TOTAL	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Nonworkers	50.00%	51.90	42.86
Workers	50.00	48.10	57.14

$X^2 = .781$ ($p < .60 > .70$)

This is not to say, however, that the total high school labor market experience for each school is identical. Besides numbers employed, other aspects of employment that differ are the earnings from employment, the hours worked, and the number of jobs held.

Table 13 reports the cumulative percentages of hourly earnings for each school and a corresponding chi square value matrix for each combination of these distributions. Of students who worked while in school, those in the private schools were likely to have earned higher hourly wages, by ranking of chi square values. A

Table 13. Cumulative Percentage Distribution of Hourly Earnings for All Students Who Were Employed While in School and a Matrix of Chi Square Values for Combinations of These Distributions[a]

Earnings (Dollars)	School Name		
	Job Corps	Continuation	Private
0.00- .50	10.00(10.00)	00.00(00.00)	00.00(00.00)
.51- .75	20.00(10.00)	.97(.97)	6.66(6.66)
.76-1.00	30.00(10.00)	7.76(6.79)	6.66(00.00)
1.01-1.25	70.00(40.00)	33.00(25.24)	33.32(26.66)
1.26-1.50	70.00(00.00)	70.86(37.86)	39.66(6.34)
1.51-1.75	80.00(10.00)	80.56(9.60)	46.64(6.98)
1.76-2.00	80.00(00.00)	90.26(9.70)	53.30(6.66)
2.01-2.25	90.00(10.00)	95.11(4.85)	66.63(13.33)
2.26-2.50	90.00(00.00)	96.08(.97)	79.96(13.33)
2.51+	100.00(10.00)	100.00(3.02)	100.00(20.04)

Chi Square Matrix[b]			
Job Corps	0.0	5.04*	5.38*
Continuation	-	0.0	7.23**
Private	-	-	0.0

*Significant at the .05 level.
**Significant at the .01 level.

[a]Actual percentage distribution given in parentheses.

[b]Derived from the Kolmogrov-Smirnov Chi Square Transformation for two independent samples.

significantly larger level of confidence is gained by pairing the private school distribution with any other distribution. These hourly earnings differentials were not attributable to either attainment or race. For the entire sample no significant correlation (at the .05 percent level) was found when hourly earnings were covaried with either attainment or race.

However, a higher distribution of earnings for the private school need not mean that private students on the whole earned more

than other students. Total earnings is a function of time worked and wages. If total hours worked per week do not differ from school to school, then one may conclude that private students did indeed earn more as a result of a higher pay schedule. In fact, this was the case: mean hours per week for each school were 25.9 for the corpsmen, 26.16 for the continuation students, and 23.06 for the private students. Differences between any pairs of these means were insufficient to be significant at the 5 percent level. Within each school no relationship existed when earnings per hour were covaried with hours worked. The resulting correlations showed that the hourly earnings of students were in no way directly related to the hours they worked.[1]

Of those dropouts who worked while in school, there was no difference in the mean number of jobs held by the students in each vocational school. The average student in each setting was employed approximately two times during his stay in school.

In summary, the in-school work experience of these respondents in the three types of vocational schools did not differ in terms of the number of students employed, the hours of employment or the number of jobs held. However, private students seem to have received higher wages for their labor.

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[1]These correlation coefficients were: $r_{\text{Job Corps}} = .42$; $r_{\text{Continuation}} = -.03$; $r_{\text{Private}} = .24$. None of these relationships was significant at the .05 level.

The Work-Study Controversy

It is often assumed that work experience during the high school years is beneficial to the potential dropout. This concept, called work-study, has its conceptual roots in the preparation for many professional and semiprofessional occupations such as nursing and teaching. In essence, this belief maintains that working during the schooling process increases the attractiveness of school, and therefore increases its holding power. Students are allowed to gain from actual employment while they continue their education. Another benefit of work-study for the high school student was reported by Clarence D. Long. "Some years ago, Long reported that part-time work experience is a significant factor in the ability of boys to stay employed once they entered the full-time labor market."[2]

More recently, Freedman re-executed Long's design and found totally contrary results.[3] Freedman argued that the results of work-study approaches could be extremely detrimental. Outside work experience may harden the student's feelings against the school; simultaneously, a dislike for low-skilled menial jobs may alienate the student from the world of work as well. Determining whether the benefits of work-study were equally distributed among the schools in our sample may shed light on this controversy.

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[2]Marcia K. Freedman, "Part-time Work Experience and Potential Early School Leavers," American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, Vol. 333, No. 3 (April 1963), p. 511.

[3]Ibid.

No specific effort was used to measure the presence of formal work-study programs in the personal history of the vocational school students, because it was believed that the presence of formalized programs was not necessary. Indeed, the fundamental elements of a formal work-study program are employment and schooling. Long's initial research was done before work-study programs were formally started on the high school level. As we have seen, each school in our sample has an approximately equal proportion of students who worked during high school. Unfortunately, the students in this sample may be considered the failures of work-study since the program failed to retain them until graduation.

Since the goals of work-study are to enhance the attractiveness of school while satisfying the student's need for employment, one would expect the failures of the work-study concept--the early school leavers--to express negative feelings about the idea of continued schooling. That is to say, school leavers should be those students who like work but dislike school in spite of the work-study opportunity. The students were asked whether they liked the jobs they had had while in high school. The yes-no answer from this question was correlated with the answer to a previous question on the student's attitudes towards school. The results show that three out of five Job Corpsmen with high school work experience tended to like school. All of those who liked school also reported positive sentiments towards their high school jobs. Approximately 50 percent of the working continuation students reported that they

liked school, and again the vast number of these students also liked their jobs. Private schools had the highest incidence of working high school students who liked school. Nearly 75 percent expressed a favorable attitude towards school, but only one-half of these students had liked their high school jobs.

With the high incidence of positive sentiments towards work and school by the Job Corps and continuation students, one can conclude that the work-study concept failed to prevent these students' leaving prematurely. The presence of an additional factor which may cause school withdrawal ought not to be obscured by the work-study panacea. For both the Job Corps and continuation subsamples, the Freedman hypothesis is rejected--no excessive alienation towards work or school was found as a result of work-study practices. Yet, on the other hand, work-study for this sample cannot be viewed as a device which enhances school retention.

The behavior of private students, however, seems to require an alternative explanation. It would appear that these students are indeed the failures of the work-study approach to school retention. For them, work-study has failed to yield the proper cluster of attitudes, or, work-study has altered attitudes insufficiently to affect the desire to leave.

Some would maintain that the negative attitude towards low level unskilled jobs is just the self-motivating type of attitude that work-study should achieve. However, if this were true, why

are these types of students presently high school dropouts?[4] We recall the findings that private students tended to view school as relevant for them, with the probable result that they tended to remain in school longer. The holding power of the school for these students is possibly increased by the formation of negative attitudes towards working while in high school. And, in this respect, it is part of the over-all impact of socioeconomic family status upon student opinions.

The Post-High School Full-Time Labor Market

Labor Force Status

After formally leaving high school, students of vocational education sought full-time employment in the labor market. Among schools there was no statistically significant difference in the number of jobs acquired by students who sought employment before entrance into their respective vocational institutions.

Interestingly, one-quarter of the Job Corps students never became employed, while 40 percent of the continuation student body remained either unemployed or out of the labor force. The corresponding figure for the private schools was 14.2 percent.

In attempting to determine whether the nonemployed post-high school students were ever unemployed, the question was asked whether they ever sought a job and did not get it. The results of this

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[4]Some evidence was discovered which links work satisfaction with earnings. When hourly earnings while in high school were covaried with the satisfaction with work associated with these jobs, the resulting chi square equaled -.985.

question are shown in Table 14. Consideration should be made that this procedure is an extremely simple means of defining and measuring unemployment. Nevertheless, the results based on this question show no excessively significant variation between schools.

Table 14. Percentage Distribution of Reported Difficulty in Finding a Job in the Post-High School Labor Market, by School Name

Level of Difficulty	School Name		
	Job Corps	Continuation	Private
TOTAL	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Always worked when wanted	50.00	52.00	64.29
Could not get a job when wanted at least once	50.00	48.00	35.71

$X^2 = 2.207$ $(p < .50 > .30)$

To close in on the problem, about one-half of the Job Corps and continuation students who never held a job during this period reported difficulty when attempting to seek employment. All of the private students with no reported employment in the post-high school period, stated that they never sought employment. A tentative conclusion, therefore, is that the incidence of labor force nonparticipation among those who never worked after leaving high school was unequal among schools. Job Corps and continuation students had an equal proportion of students without work experience. However, private students without work experience tend to be those who refused entrance into the labor market. This conspicuous performance by

private students causes us to conclude a similar type of relationship when discussing the incidence of unemployment between schools. The private students have a lower post-high school unemployment rate than either the continuation or Job Corps students.

Labor Market Knowledge

The labor market success of the high school dropout is influenced by many supply and demand factors. Typically, dropouts are disadvantaged in the labor market, because their level of education is lower than the over-all level of education for young workers. Employers, only naturally, will canvass the labor market and seek the best possible workers. Where educational attainment in the form of a high school diploma is considered to be a desirable trait for employability, the dropout will suffer.

An interesting question to ask is whether all dropouts are affected equally as a result of these competitive forces. In spite of the overriding competition from high school graduates for the limited number of jobs available, the high school dropout must compete against his fellow dropout for employment. In this competition with his fellow dropout, we know, for example, that the incidence of unemployment is greater for nonwhite dropouts than for white dropouts. Therefore, racial discrimination added to the competitive forces of the labor market worsen the position of the nonwhite school leaver.

An additional influencing factor is the level of awareness each dropout has of labor market operations. Premature school leavers who are aware of how and where to look for employment can theoretically overcome some of the relative disadvantages caused by attainment, and can be one step ahead of their fellow dropouts in the job search.

It has generally been assumed that all dropouts are totally unaware of labor market mechanisms. This naivete is usually the functional justification for concentrated counseling operations with the dropout, and for focusing the job placement activities for him. It still remains to measure the dropout in terms of his knowledge concerning the labor market. In this respect, this study provides us with an opportunity for testing the dropout. If all dropouts have the same level of awareness, then the students in each school will yield similar results on standardized tests.

The students were presented with six alternative means of acquiring information about job openings. These six included: (1) the efforts of the school through counseling and guidance provisions to place the dropout on a job; (2) the State Employment Service or its

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[5]Labor economists have for many years recognized the significance of labor market information. See Lloyd G. Reynolds, The Structure of Labor Markets (New York: Harper and Bros., 1951). Recently, the study of labor market knowledge for disadvantaged workers has been of major importance. See Alice Handsaker Kidder, "Job Search Among Negroes," Proceedings of the 1968 Annual Spring Meeting of the Industrial Relations Research Association (Madison: IRRA, 1968), p. 482-87.

affiliated Youth Opportunity Center were consulted for information and placement; (3) the student went to a private employment service to get a job in return for a service fee; (4) the student checked the newspaper classified advertising for openings; (5) friends were asked to provide help in placing; and (6) the student applied for employment by approaching employers and requesting work.

Table 15 presents the proportion of students in each school who reported using these six alternative methods of acquiring a job and information pertinent to employment. It appears that all students attempted about the same number of job search efforts. However, within schools the pattern of this search was markedly different. Listed in Table 15 is the rank order of usage for each

Table 15. Alternative Methods of Job Search by the Frequency of Usage and Rank Order, by School Name[a]

Method of Job Search	School Name: Job Corps Percent	Job Corps Rank	Continuation Percent	Continuation Rank	Private Percent	Private Rank
School aided in job search	5.9	4.5	14.0	6	4.8	4.5
State Employment Service	64.7	2	40.0	4	28.6	4
Private Employment Service	5.9	4.5	14.4	5	4.8	4.5
Newspaper want ads	58.9	3	62.5	1	61.9	2
Friends	52.9	4	44.0	3	52.4	3
Went to company gate	76.5	1	54.0	2	81.0	1
Mean number of alternative methods attempted	2.25*		1.93*		1.75*	

*Differences between these means are not significant at the .05 level.

[a]Differences between these rank order distributions are significant at the .001 level based on the Kruskal-Wallis One-Way Analysis of Variance for Ranked Data.

school. Based on the Kruskal-Wallis One-Way Analysis of Variance for Ranked Data, a highly significant difference exists between schools according to the student's profile for job search procedures.

Among Job Corps students, formal counseling services of high school and private employment services were used the least. Students in more than three-quarters of the Job Corps cases sought employment on their own initiative by direct application. Continuation students resembled the corpsmen in that they rarely received assistance from their high school in the job search, nor did they favor the private employment service when seeking employment. Rather, newspaper advertisements comprised the single most frequent means of acquiring labor market information for the continuation student. Private students, like corpsmen, favored the direct gate application, while they also shared the general tendencies of not receiving high school employment oriented assistance and not frequenting the private employment services.

It is interesting to note the lack of public school counseling and guidance that was available to the dropouts. The utility of formal employment counseling for dropouts has yet to be tested. For that matter, controversy surrounds the usefulness of counseling as a school retentive device.[6] In each vocational school, the least-used

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[6]There is some evidence that schools with better counseling services have lower dropout rates. However, other findings have shown the frequency of dropouts among counseled youth to be about the same as for those without counseling. See G.E. Gill and R.O. Murrow, "Guidance and the Dropout Rate in 19 Southern Ohio Schools," Vocational Guidance Quarterly (1957), No. 5, pp. 153-55, and J.M. Yound, "Can Counseling Reduce Dropouts," The Clearing House, Vol. 30 (1955), pp. 22-23 for evidence linking reduced dropout rates to counseling services. For conflicting views see J.W.M. Rothney and V.A. Roenes, Guidance of American Youth (Harvard University Press, 1959).

method of seeking employment was the assistance of the public school. These findings are in accord with the national norm which shows that eight out of ten dropouts never received counseling and guidance while they were students.[7]

After the student leaves high school, counseling is available to him through the state employment service. Surprisingly, the more rural Job Corpsmen sought employment service advice nearly one and one-half times more frequently than continuation students and more than twice as often as private students. Job Corpsmen, however, may possess less information on the job search effort, since state employment service referral is a standard recruitment technique for the Job Corps system.

Part-Time Workers and Full-Time Vocational Students

Turning to the last time segment, Table 16 reports the answer to the question: Are you working while you are going to school?

Chi square analysis reveals significant differences between schools.

Table 16. Percentage of Full-Time Students Who Are Presently Employed Part Time, by School Name

Employment Status	School Name		
	Job Corps	Continuation	Private
TOTAL	100.00	100.00	100.00
No part-time employment	35.00	65.00	57.70
Worked part-time	65.00	35.00	42.30

$X^2 = 7.72$ ($p < .05 > .02$)

[7] U.S. Department of Labor, Manpower Report of the President and a Report on Manpower Requirements, Resources, Utilization, and Training (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1968), p. 115.

Of these differences, the responses from the Job Corps appear to be the most unique. When corpsmen are extracted from the chi square analysis the chi square analysis value falls.[8]

In interpreting these data, one must remember that the Job Corps often makes it a practice to employ its own students at jobs around the center. This work-study practice is designed to assist in attitude change.

The Need for Work

A previous chapter concluded that some differences in socioeconomic class existed between the various types of dropouts. It was felt that the socioeconomic class of a dropout can intervene in the determination of employment profiles. Socioeconomic class is, in a sense, a proxy for the need for earnings, both for self-support and for the support of a family. Table 17 lists the mean socioeconomic values for the schools and the corresponding employment profiles.

It was found that social and economic class was not a unique predictor of employment patterns for a vast majority of the situations studied. Mean socioeconomic values for workers while in school, after school withdrawal, and during vocational training were generally equal to the mean socioeconomic value for nonworkers.

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[8] Chi square value for all three samples is 7.72 ($p < .05 > .02$). When the Job Corps is extracted the value falls to .624 ($p = .50$). The effect of removing the Job Corps from this test must be viewed with some qualifications since the degrees of freedom will decrease and row and column totals will vary.

Table 17. Mean Socioeconomic Status by Employment Experience and School Name

Type of Work Experience	Mean Socioeconomic Status		
	Job Corps	Continuation	Private
During High School			
Worked	13.1	27.0	25.7
Did not work	11.4	29.5	27.5
After School Withdrawal			
Worked	10.7	26.6	28.8
Did not work	13.1	25.3	35.0
During Vocational School			
Worked	12.3	27.3	41.6*
Did not work	12.3	25.0	21.4*

*Means are significantly different at the .05 level.

The only exception was found to exist in the private schools, where presently-enrolled dropouts who held part-time employment were also of significantly higher social strata. Further investigation reveals that these semiemployed students tended to be married. Thus the previously-expressed hypothesis that marriage has some motivating influence is strengthened.

To conclude this chapter, the following findings have emerged:

(1) During the formal school years of the studied dropouts (a) 50 percent of all students regardless of their present school type worked while in high school; and (b) during this employment, private students earned higher wages.

(2) Some evidence as to the effectiveness of work-study programs was gleaned from the data. This research lacked a control

group of students who had participated in work-study programs and graduated from high school. A comparison of students who had experienced work-study with those who had not was also impossible.

(3) In the post-high school labor market (a) private students had a higher abstention rate and lower unemployment propensity than any other of the three situations studied; (b) those students who worked during this time period acquired a similar number of jobs irrespective of the duration for this period; and (c) with the exception of the Job Corps, students tended to have dissimilar understandings as to the available methods of securing employment.

(4) Present part-time work experience, after an allowance is once again made for the unique situation in the Job Corps, tended to be equal among the vocational school students.

(5) In attempting to explain the total labor market history of the dropouts, (a) it was found that socioeconomic class was not a good predictor of the desire for employment; (b) marital status, however, as a proxy for responsibility and need, was helpful in explaining the present part-time employment picture in the private school.

CHAPTER VI

THE STUDENTS VIEW VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

The discussion so far has concentrated on two major sets of influencing factors, the "demographic qualities" of the population, and the economic forces. This chapter and the next are centered on the domain of social psychology. The attitudes of the dropouts towards their present school are examined and evaluated, and those socially and culturally conditioned views which can cause differences in the motivation of the students are isolated.

The Perceived Role of Vocational Education

Any educational setting must gear its curriculum, teaching, and organization to the needs of its clientele. Recognition must be given to the fact that an awareness of the opinions of students can facilitate this accommodation. In terms of the high school dropouts, this accommodation implies an understanding of at least two interrelated cognitions. We must understand, first, why the student selected this course of study, and second, how he views his future in light of this selection.

Essentially, these opinions represent a volitional element in the school dropout matching process. Up to this point, we have concentrated on such parameters as demographic factors and school and employment experiences, which can influence a dropout in his choice

of vocational school. The purpose of this chapter is to ascertain the cognitive elements of this choice.

In pursuing this aim, one central difficulty arises. It is possible to claim that continuation students had very little choice in determining their future. We have seen, however, that each continuation student was given the alternative of remaining in his present school. Thus a choice was made. For those who would claim that this degree of voluntariness is insufficient vis-à-vis the other two vocational settings studied, the alternative of viewing continuation students as a comparison group is available. In such an instance, students in the other school types can be compared to the students in the Continuation School. The selection of either one of these two perspectives will depend upon the specific attitude or view to be measured. Where such views pertain to all students in this population regardless of school type, the first approach is used; where the question under discussion is not relevant across the board, the appropriate school is taken as a control.

Method of Attitude Measurement

The students were given a series of six statements. The directions for responding to these questions read:

> Here are some things about the way some people feel about returning to school. We would like to know your feelings about these.
>
> Please read each of the things in the list below and see how much it tells the way you feel about the school you are in now.

Students were allowed to choose among four alternative opinions. The intervals of response were:

1. I feel that way very much.
2. I feel that way pretty much.
3. I feel that way a little.
4. I don't feel that way at all.

Each choice was assigned a numerical weight which ranged from zero to three. Total disagreement was given the weight of zero, while complete agreement corresponded to a weight of three.

Responses to Attitude Questions

Table 18 lists the mean scores for each of the six questions asked. Also listed is a matrix of differences between the mean scores on any particular question.

At the 5 percent confidence level, there was a difference in mean responses to the statement: "Instead of being in this school, I wish I was working." The continuation students expressed the greatest dislike for their school, while private students were at the opposite extreme.

The influences of voluntary enrollment were reflected in the responses to the statement: "I had no choice, I was told to come to this school." Here too private students tended towards the negative end of the continuum more than the students from the Continuation School. Students in the Job Corps--another voluntary enrollment institution--had a mean response approximately equal to that of private students. Thus, relatively speaking, continuation students sense the compulsory nature of the choice they are asked

Table 18. Mean Scores on Six Reasons for Enrolling in Vocational Education and a Matrix of Differences Between Means, by School Name

Reason for Enrolling	Mean Score[a]	Matrix of Differences Between Means by School: Job Corps	Continuation	Private
1. Instead of being in this school, I wish I was working.				
Job Corps	1.30	0.0	0.60**	0.50*
Continuation	1.90	X	0.00	1.10**
Private	.80	X	X	X
2. It is expensive to go to this school.				
Job Corps	.84	0.0	.01	.26
Continuation	.83	X	0.00	.27
Private	1.10	X	X	0.00
3. This is the only school that offers me the training I want.				
Job Corps	1.85	0.0	.25	.84*
Continuation	2.10	X	0.00	.59*
Private	2.69	X	X	0.00
4. I came to this school because I couldn't get the job I wanted without specific training.				
Job Corps	1.95	0.0	1.06**	.07
Continuation	.89	X	0.00	.99**
Private	1.88	X	X	0.00
5. It is easy to get to this school because it is near my home.				
Job Corps	2.05	0.0	.38	.75
Continuation	1.67	X	0.00	.37
Private	1.30	X	X	0.00
6. I had no choice, I was told to come to this school.				
Job Corps	.55	0.0	.86**	.15
Continuation	1.41	X	0.00	1.01**
Private	.40	X	X	0.00

[a]Means are based on response weights of: I feel that way very much=3; I feel that way pretty much=2; I feel that way a little=1; and I don't feel that way at all=0.

*This difference is significant at the .05 level.

**This difference is significant at the .01 level.

to make in selecting the Continuation School. It is worthwhile noticing, however, that continuation students--while resentful or aware of this compulsion--still scored rather low on this gradient. We are told frequently that the arbitrary extension of the compulsory school age only causes the total alienation of the potential or declared dropout. Yet continuation students expressed feelings towards continued education that were well below the maximum extent of perceived resentment.

The students in each school perceived the geographic proximity of their school with equal sentiment (see statement 5 of Table 18). Since Job Corps Conservation Centers in this survey are in Wisconsin and all Job Corpsmen are Wisconsin residents, there is some possibility that non-Wisconsin Corpsmen may feel differently about this issue of geographic proximity.

Financial expenses were also perceived by all students to be of equal importance in terms of their present vocational schools (see statement 2 of Table 18). The absence of significant differences between these means is interesting in light of the varying cost relationships that exist between these schools. Continuation facilities are supported by public funds and are free to residents. Job Corps students pay no tuition and in fact receive some salary, and private students paid on the average $440 for their vocational school tuition. Furthermore, private students were more willing to assume the opportunity costs associated with their present schooling. It can be inferred that the ability of the student to pay may intervene in terms of the student's response to this statement.

All students saw their schools as the only suitable alternative training facilities available for them (see statement 3 in Table 18). However, private students were more convinced of this fact than the other two groups. Both private enrollees and corpsmen saw the connection between the training in their school and the labor market payoff in the form of desired employment (see statement 4 in Table 18). Continuation students were more likely to perceive their present educational status as having little effect upon their future employment status. This finding was further documented in Table 19.

Table 19. Perceived Level of Difficulty in Finding Employment After Vocational School by School Name

Perceived Level of Difficulty	School Name		
	Job Corps	Continuation	Private
TOTAL	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
None	40.00	35.22	95.90
Some Difficulty	60.00	56.52	7.41
A Lot of Difficulty	---	8.26	---

$X^2 = 32.16$ $p > .001$ with d.f. = 2
(Last two response categories were joined)

When asked, as in Table 19, whether they foresaw any difficulty in finding a job after their vocational school training, pupils in privately enrolled courses overwhelmingly reported confidence in their future labor market success. On the other hand, continuation students were concerned about this future. But this concern, as we recall from Chapter III, was insufficient to prompt the students to geographic mobility for better jobs.

If difficulty in finding a job did arise, private students and corpsmen were generally willing to take more training, while a significantly smaller percentage of continuation students were willing to do the same. Table 20 presents the percentage distribution of responses for each of the schools to this inquiry. The absolute score of the continuation students on this gradient suggests that there were a substantial number (68 percent) who would desire advancement through self-improvement.

Table 20. Willingness to Take More Training After Graduation From Present Vocational School by School Name

Willingness to Take Additional Training	School Name		
	Job Corps	Continuation	Private
TOTAL	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Not willing	10.50	32.40	15.30
Willing	89.50	67.60	84.70

$X^2 = 13.44$ $p > .001$ with d.f. = 2

Attitude Profiles

From these findings, one can infer the following attitude profiles for the schools studied:

Private: Students now in private vocational schools voluntarily sought out these schools because of a desire to be trained in a specific skill. In this decision, neither financial nor geographic factors were of paramount importance. It appears that these students had specific jobs in mind and were willing to forego present employment for the furtherance of their careers. This drive for a

specific type of job is sufficiently large to motivate these students to take further training, if their occupational goals are not actualized.

Continuation: These students were more interested in working now than in completing their statutory attendance requirement. These students viewed further compulsory education as time-consuming, as they saw little connection between continuing studies and eventual job success. This does not mean, however, that these students were completely against the possibility of further vocational instruction. Rather, many believed the labor market contained opportunities for them, but if these opportunities failed to materialize, they were willing to be trained for employment.

Job Corpsmen: Job Corpsmen represented some middle ground between continuation and private students. Their desire for employment was greater than that of private enrollees but less than that of continuation students. For them, the Job Corps was an alternative means of acquiring the exact type of training emphasis they felt they needed. It was entirely inexpensive and near their home.

Students' Attitudes and the Participation Effect

Student participation in an educational experience often results in attitudinal change or modification. To determine the influence of this participation effect upon the attitude profiles of the previous section, the students in each school were classified into two groups according to the length of their enrollments in

Table 21. Attitudes by the Length of Student Enrollment and School Name

Attitude	Length of Stay Mean Response High	Low	Differences between High and Low Means
Instead of being in this school, I wish I was working.			
Job Corps	1.75	1.00	.75
Continuation	2.06	1.14	.92**
Private	1.62	.61	1.01
It is expensive to go to school.			
Job Corps	.63	1.00	.37
Continuation	.85	.90	.05
Private	1.57	.89	.68
This is the only school that offers me the training I want.			
Job Corps	1.75	1.91	.16
Continuation	.71	.53	.19
Private	2.42	2.73	.31
I came to this school because I couldn't get the job I wanted without specific training.			
Job Corps	1.75	2.25	.50
Continuation	1.40	1.35	.05
Private	1.83	1.89	.06
It is easy to get to this school because it is near my home.			
Job Corps	1.25	1.41	.16
Continuation	1.90	2.27	.37**
Private	1.85	1.21	.64
I had no choice. I was told to come to this school.			
Job Corps	1.00	.25	.75
Continuation	.64	.94	.35**
Private	0	0	0

**This difference is significant at the .01 level.

that school. This dichotomy was based upon the mean length of stay in each school.

Such mean lengths of stay varied between schools simply because the distribution of enrollment duration differed in each school. Continuation students, on the average, remained in vocational school for approximately seven months after choosing to enroll. Job Corps students tended to stay between four and five months, and private students averaged almost six months of attendance.

Table 21 shows the mean attitude score when an allowance for the participation effect is made. The major conclusions from this table center around the continuation students. As enrollment time increased, the desire to work rather than attend school increased. Furthermore, students with above-average enrollment duration in the Continuation School felt that their decision to attend this school was less compulsory than continuation students with below-average length of enrollment.

Based on these results, it is difficult to determine where length of stay on a compulsory basis can produce modifications in terms of student resentments towards their forced status. Either participation modifies resentment over time, or, through self-selection, those students who are totally resentful and alienated leave the educational institution.

CHAPTER VII

THE LEVEL AND DETERMINANTS OF ECONOMIC MOTIVATION

The attitude profiles for each school suggest that each type of student is motivated towards different ends. Essentially, the attitudinal split is between those students who view immediate employment as their goal, and those who sense the future profitability of vocational training. It would be unfair to pass judgment on this situation and claim that this latter type of student has "good" or "properly directed" motivations, while the others are too immediately oriented. Rather, each of these goals is a manifestation of a specific aspect of individual motivation. Specifically, it is that portion of the respondent's motivation which is directly related to the economic success of individuals.

Rosen's concept of "achievement values" is such an aspect of motivation.[1] Achievement values should not be confused with achievement motivation which is essentially a personality trait that transposes any specific type of behavior. Achievement values are related strictly to the world of work and are relevant to the desire to be upwardly mobile through economic success.

For purposes of this investigation, the desire to enroll in vocational school and the desire to seek employment are both efforts

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[1]Bernard C. Rosen, "Race, Ethnicity, and the Achievement Syndrome," American Sociological Review (February 1959).

which are designed to achieve upward mobility. By quantifying the achievement values of both groups, it will be possible to determine which decision is associated with a higher level of economic motivation.

Measuring the Level of Achievement Values

The measurement of achievement values involves the quantification of the propensity to undertake the necessary steps for achievement. "These steps are (1) to plan, (2) to work, (3) to make sacrifices, all of which are presumed to be related to value orientations concerning (1) activism versus passivism, (2) present versus future outlook, and (3) individualism."[2]

To quantify such achievement values each respondent was asked to indicate whether he "strongly agreed," "agreed," "disagreed," or "strongly disagreed" with each of the six following statements:

1. In his work all a person should want is a secure, not too difficult job with enough pay for a nice car and home.
2. The wise person lives for today and lets tomorrow take care of itself.
3. When a person is born the success he will have is in the cards, so he may as well accept it.
4. It is best to have a job as part of an organization all working together even if you don't get individual credit.
5. Don't expect too much out of life and be content with what comes your way.
6. Planning only makes a person unhappy since your plans hardly ever work out anyway.[3]

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[2]Harold L. Sheppard and A. Harvey Belitsky, The Job Hunt (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1966), p. 123.

[3]Based on Rosen, "Race, Ethnicity, and Achievement," p. 56.

The respondents who could not decide on their feelings were allowed to indicate so in answering these questions.

Each answer was assigned a numerical weight which increased proportionately to the extent of disagreement registered. The cumulative score for all six questions was then a measure of the total achievement value possessed by each respondent, and is hereafter referred to as an achievement value index. The maximum index score possible was 30, while the lowest possible score was 6.

Also computed for each school was a Total Actualization Score (TAS). The TAS is the total score of all respondents divided by the theoretical maximum score.[4]

Table 22 depicts the percentage breakdown for each school in terms of a high-to-low achievement value index score dichotomy. In addition, school means are presented which reveal that private students possess significantly greater achievement value indexes than either the Continuation School or Job Corps students. The scores on this gradient for Job Corps and continuation students show no substantial differences between these two schools.

The level of achievement value indexes by school was found to be inversely proportional to the degree of work orientation displayed by the students. The previous chapter found that private students wanted immediate employment in lieu of vocational school

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[4]The Total Actualization Score (TAS) = $\sum_{i=1}^{6} Q/30N$; where Q is the score for each response registered on all questions, and N is the total number of respondents in a category of school. The pattern of confidence limits for TAS must be similar to the confidence limit pattern exhibited by the means of this sample.

attendance less than any of the students studied. In continuing studies, the results were directly the opposite, and Job Corps students occupied the middle ground. The TAS shows that the private students had the highest record; Job Corps and continuation students followed in that order.

Table 22. Percentage Distribution of Achievement Value Scores by School Name

Achievement Value Score	School Name		
	Job Corps	Continuation	Private
TOTAL	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Low:			
6-17	40.00	51.31	14.81
18-20	15.00	21.93	18.52
Total	55.00	73.24	33.33
High:			
21-23	20.00	15.79	11.11
24-30	15.00	10.96	55.55
Total	45.00	26.65	66.66
Mean Score[a]	18.80	17.00	23.37
Total Actualization Score	62.66	56.68	77.90

[a]Differences between Job Corps and Continuation are not significant at the .05 probability level.

Differences between Job Corps and Private are significant at the .01 probability level.

Differences between Continuation and Private are significant at the .01 probability level.

However, when students in each school with high achievement value indexes were examined, they were found to have identical views concerning the desirability of employment as compared with

the desire to continue their education.[5] These views stressed the desirability of remaining in school as opposed to an immediate withdrawal to find employment.

From these findings, it can be inferred that the desire to seek immediate employment is usually associated with relatively low achievement value indexes. Schools differ in terms of their overall achievement value indexes, because of the relative mix of low and high achievers. While these school differences may be significant, it is important that we recognize the existence of high achievers in every school.

The Determinants of Achievement Values

Achievement values are culturally determined. They are the result of social interaction between the students and their families, peers, and environment. Traditionally, an achievement value index has been used to examine the economic motivation between social groups. Rarely is an investigation conducted to determine the level of achievement values within a particular population such as high school dropouts.

This study, however, has already documented the existence of many subgroups within this dropout population. The theory of achievement values would have us believe that these subgroup identities can influence the student in the formation of achievement values.

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[5]The achievement motivation index of each student was covaried with the student's attitude on the desirability of immediate employment. The results of this procedure showed a significant negative relationship at the 5 percent level ($r = -.2$).

Socioeconomic Class

Perhaps the most dominant of these subgroupings in terms of value formation is the social and economic class of the student. Thus, given the socioeconomic class differences that exist between schools, the differences in the achievement value indexes between schools reflect these identities more than they reflect school attachments.

It is recalled from Chapter II that the socioeconomic classes of both the continuation students and the private students were approximately equal. Yet continuation students, along with Job Corpsmen, displayed markedly lower achievement value indexes than the private students. It appears that within the lower socioeconomic classes, achievement value indexes are not extremely sensitive to the variations in social class. Thus, the milieu of value-forming processes for those in families of lower socioeconomic class must be a function of additional variables, such as the race of the respondent, or the influence of the school in the formation of values.

Race

To compensate for the influence of race, achievement value indexes were computed for each school in terms of a homogeneous racial comparison. The results of these comparisons show no major differences from the previous findings on achievement value indexes and school type.

White students in continuation studies tended to have the lowest achievement value index when compared with whites in the Job Corps

and in private schools. Private white students maintained their lead on this score.

The nonwhite comparison was restricted to the continuation and Job Corps students because of the conspicuous absence of nonwhites from the private type of vocational education. Nonwhite Corpsmen were found to be significantly more economically motivated than continuation nonwhites in terms of the achievement value index.

Participation Effect

Achievement values can also be influenced by the educational process. Educational institutions attempt to instill cultural values. Often this attempt is directed at the formation of values deemed prerequisite for economic success. The degree to which this cultural transfer is stressed will vary with the stated educational objectives of the particular school. In terms of the schools in this study, one would expect a greater concern for attitudinal education in the Job Corps, a less formalized approach to the problem in the Continuation School, and almost an absence of such emphasis in the private schools.

To counter this influence on achievement values, indexes were calculated for each school, but this time an allowance was made for the length of enrollment time for each student. Table 23 presents the percentage breakdown of enrollment duration according to the high-to-low dichotomy employed in the previous chapter, and a high-to-low description of achievement value indexes.

Table 23. Percentage Distribution of Achievement Value Indexes by the Length of Enrollment Time and by School Name

Achievement Value Index	School Name: Job Corps Enrollment[a]		Continuation Enrollment		Private Enrollment	
	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High
TOTAL[b]	100.00%		100.00%		100.00%	
Low: 6-21	35.0	20.0	38.0	33.3	25.0	4.1
High: 21-30	30.0	15.0	17.0	28.0	49.9	20.8
Chi Square Value	2.67 ($p < .10$)		4.01 ($p < .10$)		.87 ($p < .10$)	

[a]High-to-low split is based upon mean enrollment times for each school.

[b]Totals may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

In each school, the contrast between above-average and below-average enrollment durations is insufficient to warrant the acceptance of the hypothesis: achievement values are influenced by the duration of school enrollment. This conclusion is only tentative. Students who have internalized the proper values may have left these vocational settings.

Indeed, many factors influence the alteration of attitudes during the educational process. If anything, the above findings seem to suggest that the duration of enrollment is not a singularly sufficient predictor of attitudinal change.

CHAPTER VIII

A REVIEW OF FINDINGS AND SEVERAL CONCLUSIONS

The initial aims of this investigation were to answer three questions concerning the vocational educational structure and the high school dropout. Once again, these questions are:

(1) To what extent do high school dropouts participate in vocational education?

(2) What are the characteristics of dropouts who participate in vocational education?

(3) What motivates these dropouts to attend vocational school?

The findings of this report shed some light upon the answers to these questions. In addition, the gathered information suggests some general statements concerning an over-all allocation model of dropouts to vocational schools.

Findings in Review

The Availability of Vocational Education

The first major finding of this investigation is reported in Table 2 of the chapter of methodology. From Table 2, it is seen that, at the time of this investigation, only 600 high school dropouts in Wisconsin were identified as students in vocational programs. We can augment this total with an estimate of the number of pupils who were enrolled in the PRIV/VOL/TOT category. Best estimates of this subtotal amount to about two to three hundred students.[1] The

[1]This information was provided by the staff of the OIC. An exact figure was impossible because student records were often incomplete.

final total of pupils without a completed high school education is somewhere between eight and nine hundred. The question remains as to whether this is an adequate performance. Or, phrased differently, what proportion of high school dropouts are not enrolled in vocational instruction?

A good case can be documented to show that Wisconsin's experience with school retention has improved considerably in the last five years. In 1962-63, almost one out of every five Wisconsin students never completed high school, while in 1966-67 approximately one out of every ten such students was destined to leave prematurely.[2] However, while school dropout rates have decreased, school enrollments have increased. By applying the 1966-67 dropout rate to 1966-67 school year enrollment data for all public high schools, we can crudely estimate that some 14,258 males who started the ninth grade in the fall of 1963 did not complete high school. In Milwaukee alone, approximately 1,542 males were identified as functional illiterates for armed forces draft induction in the period between March 1966 and April 1968.[3] While the relative and absolute performance of Wisconsin on school retention gradients is worthy of

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[2]These retention rates have been compiled by the National Education Association as reported in: National Education Association, Research Division, Ranking of the States (Washington, January 1964 and 1968 respectively). Additional retention performance for Milwaukee has been compiled by the Senate Republican Policy Committee, where it was found that Milwaukee had a dropout rate of 5.5 percent; see Sar A. Levitan, Vocational Education and Federal Policy (Kalamazoo: W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, 1963), p. 18.

[3]Date provided by the Wisconsin State Employment Service.

praise, these crude estimates show that the problem is still of noteworthy proportions.

The severity of the problem is highlighted by the findings of this study. This investigation found only a very small number of school leavers actually engaged in vocational education. If survey information were available to document that only those now in vocational instruction were truly only those who desired vocational instruction, then it could be claimed that Wisconsin has met some of its responsibilities in providing educational services. Such a survey has not been conducted and we must fall back upon secondary data. In general, this secondary information points to the growing discrepancy between the vocational instruction aspirations of dropouts and the availability of such instruction.

In the public sector, as in the WBVTAE system, there were only 1,031 male students engaged in compulsory vocational instruction in 1966-67.[4]

Private vocational or proprietary schools are not willing to increase their enrollments of high school dropouts. Only 10 percent of these schools have admission requirements which allow the entrance of high school leavers. Many of these schools reported that they would not accept a high school leaver irrespective of their admission requirements. A telephone conversation with the director of one of these schools characterizes this opinion. The

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[4]WBVTAE, "Summary of Enrollment, 1966-67," mimeographed.

director proudly proclaimed, "We have no high school dropouts enrolled in this course of study, and as a matter of fact, we most probably wouldn't allow him to enter even if he did apply."[5]

Other proprietary schools place entrance obstacles in the way of the dropout. An example of these obstacles can be seen by examining the admission requirements of schools that teach data processing. The dropout who seeks some training in computer or business machine operation (i.e. key-punching and/or card sorting) finds that he must first complete a general equivalency diploma (GED) at his own expense before undertaking data processing instruction. Thus, not quite 5 percent of all students taking data processing courses at three different data processing schools in Milwaukee in April 1968 could claim to have been high school dropouts.[6]

The availability of the GED can be viewed as a means of enhancing the credentials of premature school leavers, but it can also be viewed as a sort of "educational discrimination" whereby proprietary schools reinforce the arbitrary opinion of the business community that a high school diploma is imperative for advancement. School leavers now find that they are disadvantaged not only because they have failed to acquire a regular four-year high school education, but also because they have failed to acquire the available GED. The GED becomes a badge of merit, an accomplishment, without which

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[5]Interview, anonymous, April 1968.

[6]Data provided upon request by three of four data processing schools, in Milwaukee. Of 927 students who dropped out of high school, a total of 44 completed the general equivalency diploma.

the student is viewed as being unable to acquire the necessary learning for low-skilled jobs.

The closing of the McCoy Job Corps Center at Sparta only served to aggravate the situation in the state by limiting the availability of vocational instruction. Its disappearance left a vacuum which, as of this time, has not been filled.

In summary, while gathering the sample for the questionnaire portion of this research, a serious situation was discovered. The need for more vocational and training situations that are accessible to dropouts is blatant. If public agencies and/or private business are to fill this gap, then sound policy must be built upon a knowledge of the characteristics of this group.

The Characteristics of High School Dropouts in Vocational Education

The survey portion of this research sought a limited amount of information on the characteristics of the premature school leaver in three different school settings. Nevertheless, these characteristics were sufficient to reveal a degree of variance between the students in each educational setting. The following are student profile summaries for each of the examined situations.

Private Vocational Schools: Students in private vocational instruction were found to be on the average 19 years of age. Racial representation was limited to white students; nonwhite participation was conspicuously absent. Students in this type of educational environment had the highest socioeconomic status in the entire sample. Furthermore, private students had the greatest tendency to report that they at one time were married.

The residential history of the private students showed them to have the greatest number of individual moves in their backgrounds. Private students were also the most likely group to express a willingness to be geographically mobile in the future. It was found that this willingness was associated with the age of the private students rather than with their previous propensity to move.

On the average, these students were better educated than the rest of the sample. They completed a mean of 10.4 school years. Their decision to leave school was reported as a function of their dislike for school. However, private students had a tendency to perceive the subject matter of their education as relevant for them.

The labor market experience of this group was in some ways unique. Those private students who worked while in high school earned higher wages for their labor when compared to the rest of the working dropout sample. Their hours of work and number of high school jobs, as aspects of employment, however, did not differentiate them from other school groups. After leaving high school, these proprietary school students tended to refrain from entering the labor market more than any of the groups studied. Those who entered the market to seek employment had the least difficulty of all the dropouts in obtaining employment. Once in the full-time job market, private students favored direct application at the employer's gate in the search for employment. Few private students received assistance from their high school in acquiring a job. Part-time employment while attending vocational school was found to be related

to the marital status of the private students, where the married students were likely to be the students who held part-time jobs.

Continuation: Students in this school were on the average 16.6 years old, and few of them had ever married. The socioeconomic ranking of this group showed them to be on the average of the same socioeconomic strata as the Job Corpsmen, but lower than the private students. Racial representation in this school was the most diverse of all the schools studied.

Continuation students were most likely to display a varied pattern of regional identities from the time of birth.

The average educational attainment of continuation students was nine years, and was generally equal to the attainment pattern for Job Corpsmen. Continuation students stated as their major reason for leaving school an over-all alienation from formal education. School was viewed by them as being unenjoyable and a waste of time.

The labor market experience of the students in continuing studies did not stand out as a particularly distinctive trait. Continuation students had the same propensity as all the other students to work while in high school; they worked the same number of hours as all the other high school workers and received the same wages as the corpsmen for their labor. Continuation students rarely received assistance from their school in finding employment once they left high school. During their present vocational education, these students were the least likely to hold part-time employment. Finally, socioeconomic status as a proxy for the need to work did not explain the work-nonwork patterns of these dropouts.

Job Corps: These vocational school pupils averaged 18 years of age. Conservation camp corpsmen were found to be generally younger than corpsmen in the rest of the Job Corps system. In addition, Wisconsin Job Corps camps displayed a greater representation of minority students, with Negro representation greater in Wisconsin camps as compared to the entire Job Corps population. In terms of the three-way school comparisons of this study, Wisconsin conservation centers had the highest proportion of Indian students in the entire sample.

The Job Corps portion of this sample had city-size identities that were unique. These students were not only more rural in character than other students in the sample, but even more rural in character than other corpsmen in the rest of the Job Corps conservation system.

Corpsmen attributed their separation from school to a function of the difficulty of school work and a dislike for school. This separation took place on the average during the first half of the ninth grade, and thus gave the corpsmen an attainment profile which is very similar to that of the continuation students.

Work experience during high school for corpsmen was found to be similar to the work experiences displayed by continuation students. Similarly, the labor market history for corpsmen once they left school was parallel to the experience of the continuation students. Corpsmen showed a greater knowledge of the methods of job search by favoring state employment and referral agencies. However, one would

expect this tendency, given the involvement of state employment services in the Job Corps recruitment process. During vocational instruction, the corpsmen exhibited a greater propensity for part-time work when compared to the other two samples. This differential can be attributed to the formal practice of the Corps to employ work-study programs as a learning device. For corpsmen, socioeconomic status failed to explain the incidence of employment while in school, after separation from school, and while in vocational school.

The Rationale of Dropouts Taking Vocational Education

The final aim of this study is to ascertain the underlying motivational or influencing factors that have caused the dropouts to attend vocational school. Once again, differences between the students in the three types of schools were examined.

Continuation students, as we would expect, did register some resentment over the level of compulsion involved in their decision to take vocational instruction. This resentment was also manifested in the inclination of continuation students to seek employment rather than continue their education. The present vocational instruction was viewed as being unrelated to any future labor market payoff. In the light of these findings, the relative lack of desire of these students to undertake future training is understandable. It was found that this orientation of continuation students was associated with a generally lower level of achievement values or economic motivation.

Private students represented the opposite extreme. Students in these schools perceived their enrollment in vocational education as a voluntary act. The specific training these students desired was seen by them as being highly relevant for employment and career payoffs. These students had a strong tendency to acknowledge the utility of future training. The finding that these students viewed their present school as the only possible place to acquire the training they specifically desired indicates that the available vocational education resources were recognized as limited. An important aspect of the attitudes of this group stems from their willingness to accept training costs. One could hypothesize that the relatively high socioeconomic status of this group accounts for its ability to pay tuition costs that averaged $440 per training course. Finally, these students scored relatively high on an achievement value scale, as high achievement value orientations were associated with the desire to seek advancement through training.

Job Corpsmen were found to hold some middle ground between the two other groups. There was some discernment of a desire to work rather than attend vocational school, but at the same time, feelings were strong concerning the relevancy of the training experience to future success. Interestingly, the corpsmen also viewed the Job Corps as their only training alternative.

General Conclusions

Certain broad implications and conclusions can be drawn from the findings of this investigation. The first conclusion is almost self-evident. The three situations studied--with one exception--are not mutually exclusive alternatives. That is to say, enrollment in any one type of educational institution does not preclude the possibility of future enrollment in another type of vocational school. The one exception is the flow of students from voluntary enrollment organizations back into the Continuation School type of program. In this respect the exception defines the flow of students: when students are separated from formal instruction in public schools, they are forced to turn elsewhere for vocational education.

In search for vocational instruction, the dropout encounters the problem of matching his desires for instruction with the existing vocational structure. Phrased differently, the student who seeks training can achieve actualization of this desire if, and only if, training is available. While at first glance this statement seems overtly simplistic, the findings of this study tend to reveal that this is the heart of the problem. It appears that certain factors diminish the possibility of a dropout achieving vocational instruction.

First, not all available programs are accessible to the high school dropout. Private programs, it has been found, place obstacles in the path of the student. Such obstacles are:

(1) economic or pricing discrimination in the form of prohibitive tuitions for the disadvantaged individual; (2) educational discrimination in the form of a high school diploma as a requirement for entrance; and (3) reliance upon the GED as an additional screening device for entrance. All of these practices adequately explain the phenomenon revealed in this study: the tendency is for a small number of high school dropouts to participate in private vocational instruction.

Public compensatory programs like the Job Corps partially fill the gap in education for dropouts. However, indications exist that recruitment procedures for conservation camp members are haphazard. That is, those who at some point end up at the employment office eventually are enlisted in the Job Corps system. Knowledge of the employment service's function was found to be generally minimal in non-Job Corps high school dropouts, indicating that many dropouts do not have the opportunity to familiarize themselves with this alternative.

The Wisconsin system of vocational instruction makes little effort to salvage the failures of the public instruction system. While the WBVTAE has made some recent strides in this area, the fact that they are recent events says a great deal.[7]

If we look at the continuation experience as a source of future disadvantaged workers in the labor market, then we can glean some

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[7]One example of these newer programs is Project Out Reach. See WBVTAE, 1966-67 Descriptive Report (Madison, 1967), p. 57.

measure of the extent to which substantial numbers of these students will seek additional training. For these workers, labor market experience may prove to be a frustrating or motivating experience, or, normal personality maturation may expand the size of the group of those who want training. Our major concern should be to provide the opportunity for this training.

In providing these opportunities, we must make an effort to increase the retention possibilities of our school systems. A concentration on either retention or compensatory programs will be self-defeating. The guiding principle is to bring dropouts up to the level of graduates throughout comprehensive programs. Our hope is that educational processes can eliminate the high school dropout problem.

In terms of compensatory programs, we must seek some sort of effective supply of education. By effective supply of education we mean a system of accessible programs. The next chapter will attempt to cement these ideas into the form of concrete recommendations.

CHAPTER IX

LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study of high school dropouts enrolled in vocational education should not be interpreted as a definitive statement of the situation in Wisconsin. Certain methodological aspects of this study limit our ability to totally generalize the findings of this report.

In any attempt to study the behavioral patterns of man through research, there are inherent methodological limitations. This study is no exception. Questions of sampling techniques, questionnaire validity, and data inference are present in varying degrees in the study. At best, attempts have been made to limit the number of methodological difficulties, given the nature of the topic.

Furthermore, there are particular procedural matters that should be mentioned. During the course of this study, it became necessary to delineate the purpose and extent of the investigation. If this effort is to be repeated, then perhaps different perspectives on the problem may prove useful.

The first procedural question concerns the definition of a high school dropout enrolled in vocational instruction. A repetition of this study should include an allowance for female dropouts and the problems germane to this group. Also, some concessions should be

made for the noninstitutionalized form of vocational instruction through correspondence schools.

Secondly, throughout the present investigation, the quality of vocational skills has never been discussed. There are of course many administrative and methodological difficulties involved in the attempt to measure the quality of vocational instruction. The absence of this type of information from this study might lead the reader to believe that vocational instruction is comparable among all studied situations. If this impression was given, the author apologizes and hopes that future investigation will correct this shortcoming.

Thirdly, in collecting future data, researchers may desire to concentrate on a battery-of-tests approach rather than a single questionnaire. The possibility of determining many added variables, such as student IQ, is enhanced through the battery-of-tests approach.

Finally, perhaps a re-execution of this study would warrant a complete alteration in the research perspective. One such change in perspective could combine all the dropouts into one large sample and then examine their rationale for taking vocational instruction in terms of their personal characteristics. In this case, the creation of a control sample may prove useful.

Policy Recommendations

The experience of this investigation has produced some recommendations in the area of high school dropouts and vocational

instruction. The discussion of these recommendations is broadly phrased with the hope that further research will help clarify the specifics of these proposals.

An obvious improvement in our knowledge of high school dropouts can be achieved by the simple accumulation of dropout statistics. There are, of course, some inherent difficulties in compiling dropout statistics, such as the selection of the time perspective and the definition of a dropout. Such difficulties can be overcome. Many additional problems are political in nature, with some school boards unwilling to reveal their effectiveness. It may also prove worthwhile to identify dropouts as individuals, and provide the mechanism by which educational systems can keep in touch with the school leaver.

The second major recommendation is that the WBVTAE make vocational instruction accessible to high school dropouts. Many dropouts may not immediately desire this training, as indicated by the large delay between the time of school withdrawal and vocational school entrance of private students. Often, job opportunities can serve to immediately dissuade the dropout from recognizing the importance of vocational education. But other students, like the corpsmen, wanted these benefits shortly after leaving school. In any event, the opportunity should be there for such students.

The creation of policies to aid the dropout in obtaining vocational instruction need not center around the creation of new physical programs, although new programs administered by the WBVTAE are one way of filling the educational gap.

Additional possibilities exist for the WBVTAE to solve this problem administratively. First, special allowance for high school dropouts can be made to bring the more able of these youngsters into the existing WBVTAE post-high school system.

Second, compensatory relationships, utilizing state or federal funds to induce and supplement the expense of a proprietary school education can be envisioned. This approach would also require a great deal of cooperation by the private schools. Unfortunately, it would be difficult to achieve this cooperation, given the distrust private vocational school administrators have for state-run vocational programs.

Third, provisions for improving the availability of general education diplomas decrease the difficulty many dropouts have in seeking private vocational instruction.

A fourth improvement can be gained by creating and cementing relations with the State Employment Service. Close cooperation between state vocational boards and employment services--although dictated by the Vocational Education Act of 1963--is still far from ideal.[1] The immediate referral of dropouts to employment offices should increase our ability to provide guidance and counseling for this group.

Fifth, in terms of counseling, immediate steps should be taken to improve counseling programs in the school systems. This procedure

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[1]Gerald G. Somers, "The Response of Vocational Education to Labor Market Changes," Vocational Education (Madison: Published as a supplement to the Journal of Human Resources, vol. 3, 1968), p. 51.

should be directed at decreasing withdrawal rates, while at the same time providing placement and vocational guidance for the actual school leavers.

Finally, both placement and vocational guidance can possibly be improved by the adoption of certain portions of the questionnaire used in this study. For example, a determination of achievement value indicators possibly can be used to predict the return of students to vocational education after they leave. Or, knowledge of mobility preferences can serve to enhance the job placement opportunities for the students after the completion of training programs.

In conclusion, if it is found that the recommendations stated above serve only to improve the condition of a small number of highly qualified dropouts, then what are we to do for remaining numbers of school leavers? Perhaps there is no real alternative to massive programs by the state in this area.

APPENDIX A

SCHOOL INFORMATION REPORT

1. Name and address (if incorrectly listed above)

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. School Telephone: _____
Area Code

3. Do you have students with the mentioned characteristics?

/__/ YES /__/ NO

4. If yes, how many such pupils do you have? . . . . . _____

5. Approximately, what percentage of your present total student enrollment have these characteristics? . . . _____

6. Do you have any comments concerning the enclosed questionnaire? (Please use the reverse side if needed.)

7. What method of questionnaire distribution do you think is best for your school? (Again, use reverse side if needed.)

APPENDIX B

THE CENTER FOR STUDIES
IN VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION
AND
THE WISCONSIN BOARD
OF
VOCATIONAL, TECHNICAL AND ADULT EDUCATION

March, 1968

First Name _____ Last Name _____

This is not a test. It is a questionnaire which gives you the chance to tell how you feel about a lot of things. Your answers are completely confidential. We are interested in how all the answers add up together, how all people who answer feel about certain things, not in how one particular person feels.

The whole success of a study like this depends on your carefully answering all questions.

Thank you very much for your help in this study.

1. How old are you?

   (Check one box)

   ☐ 16

   ☐ 17

   ☐ 18

   ☐ 19

   ☐ 20

   ☐ 21

2. Have you ever been married?

   (Check one box)

   ☐ Yes ☐ No

3. Here are some questions about the cities you have lived in.

   a. In what city and state were you born?

      (Write in the city or town and state)

      _____, _____
      City or Town State

   b. In what city did you go to high school the longest?

      _____, _____
      City or Town State

   c. In what city or town did you live when you left high school?

      _____, _____
      City or Town State

Now, we would like to ask you some questions about the time you went to high school.

4. How many different high schools did you go to?
(Check one box)

☐ I never went to high school.

☐ I only went to one (1) high school.

☐ I went to two (2) high school.

☐ I went to three (3) different high schools.

☐ I went to more than three different high schools.

5. What was the last full year you attended high school?
(Check one box)

☐ I never went to high school.

☐ I finished the 9th grade or freshman year.

☐ I finished the 10th grade or sophomore year.

☐ I finished the 11th grade or junior year.

6. How old were you when you left high school for good?
(Check one box)

☐ 14 years old

☐ 15 years old

☐ 16 years old

☐ 17 years old

☐ 18 years old

7. Here is a list of some of the reasons why people leave high school or decide not to go on after they graduate. Please check all of the reasons that were true in your case.

☐ I wanted to stay in school but I had to leave.

☐ I left because I wasn't learning anything useful in school.

☐ I got kicked out.

☐ The school work was too hard for me. I just couldn't do it.

☐ I just didn't like school.

We are interested in knowing if you worked at a job while you were in school.

If you did work at a job, please answer all of the questions on this page.

If you didn't work at a job, please skip these questions and turn the page.

8. Did you like the jobs you had while in school? (Check one box)

☐ Yes ☐ No

9. Here is a statement about how much money you made at your job while in high school. Please fill in the blank space and check the box that is true in your case.

The most money I ever made while working at a job in high school was:

_____ a ☐ hour
☐ day
☐ week
☐ month

10. How many different jobs did you have while in school? (Check one box)

☐ I had only one (1) job.

☐ I had two (2) different jobs.

☐ I had three (3) different jobs.

☐ I had more than three jobs.

11. While in high school about how many hours a week did you usually work at your job?

(Write in the number of hours)

I usually worked _____ HOURS a week.

We would like to know about the jobs that you have worked at after you left school and before you came to this school.

12. How many different jobs did you have since you left school? (Check one box)

☐ I never got a job.

☐ I had only one (1) job.

☐ I had two (2) jobs.

☐ I had three (3) jobs.

☐ I had more than three jobs.

13. After leaving high school did you ever look for a job and not get one?

☐ Yes ☐ No

14. Did you ever move to another city to find a job?

☐ Yes ☐ No

15. Here are some ways people find jobs. Please check all of the ways you have tried after you left school.

☐ My school tried to find me a job.

☐ I went to the State Employment Service or the Youth Opportunity Center.

☐ I went to a private employment service to find a job.

☐ I looked through the want ads in the newspaper.

☐ I asked friends to help me get a job.

☐ I used to go right up to the company and ask for work.

16. Here are some things about the way some people feel about returning to school. We would like to know <u>your</u> feelings on these.

Please read each of the things in the list below and see how much it tells the way <u>you feel</u> about the school you are in <u>now</u>.

Then go to the four boxes on the right and put a check in the box that tells how you feel about the things on the list.

If you feel that way <u>very much</u>, put a check in the <u>first box</u>.

If you feel that way <u>pretty much</u>, put a check in the <u>second box</u>.

If you feel that way <u>a little</u>, put a check in the <u>third box</u>.

If you <u>don't feel that way at all</u>, put a check in the <u>fourth box</u>.

	I feel that way very much	I feel that way pretty much	I feel that way a little	I don't feel that way at all
a. Instead of being in this school, I wish I was working.	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. It is expensive to go to school.	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. This is the only school that offers me the training I want.	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. I came to this school because I couldn't get the job I wanted without specific training.	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. It is easy to get to this school; it is near my home.	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. I had no choice. I was told to come to this school.	☐	☐	☐	☐

We are interested in some information about your present school.

17. What are you studying in this school?
(Write the name of the subject on the line)

_____

18. How many months have you been enrolled in this school?
(Write in the length of time)

_____ months

We would like to learn about how you feel about your future after you leave this school.

19. Do you think you'll be able to get a job when you are through with this program?
(Check one box)

☐ I won't have trouble getting a job.

☐ I'll have some trouble.

☐ I'll have a lot of trouble.

20. If you do not get a job when you graduate would you return to a school for more training?

☐ Yes ☐ No

21. Are you willing to move to another city to find a better job after you finish this program?
(Check one box)

☐ Yes ☐ No

Here are some questions about your parents.

22. Do your parents live in Wisconsin?
(Check one box)

☐ Yes ☐ No

23. Did your father or mother live in Wisconsin last year?
(Check one box)

☐ Yes ☐ No

24. Did your father or mother live in Wisconsin two (2) years ago?
(Check one box)

☐ Yes ☐ No

25. Did your father graduate high school?
(Check one box)

☐ Yes ☐ No

26. Did your father graduate college?
(Check one box)

☐ Yes ☐ No

27. Did your mother graduate high school?
(Check one box)

☐ Yes ☐ No

28. Did your mother graduate college?
(Check one box)

☐ Yes ☐ No

29. If your father is now working, what does he do for a living?

_____

Write on this line

30. Are <u>you</u> working while you are going to school?
(Check one box)

☐ Yes ☐ No

Here are some things about the way people feel about life. We would like to know your feelings on these. Please read each of the things in the list below and see how much it tells the way you feel. Then go to the five boxes on the right and put a check in the box that tells how you feel about the thing.

If you strongly agree with it, put a check in the first box.

If you just agree with it, put a check in the second box.

If you disagree with it, put a check in the third box.

If you strongly disagree with it, put a check in the fourth box.

If you do not know how you feel, put a check in the fifth box.

(The statements of choice were as follows--a grid was available to be filled in.)

a. In his work, all a person should want is a secure, not-too-difficult job with enough pay for a nice car and home.

b. The wise person lives for today and lets tomorrow take care of itself.

c. When a person is born the success he will have is in the cards, so he may as well accept it.

d. It is best to have a job as part of an organization all working together even if you don't get individual credit.

e. Don't expect too much out of life and be content with what comes your way.

f. Planning only makes a person unhappy since your plans hardly ever work out anyway.

32. While in high school, did you own your own car? (Check one box)

☐ Yes ☐ No

33. I am a (Check one box)

☐ Negro

☐ White

☐ Puerto Rican

☐ Indian

☐ Mexican-American

☐ Other (please write in on this line) _____

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